

HAPPY SURPRISES

Madame de Ségur

Translated by

JULIA OLCOTT



Illustrated by

ELEANORE MINEAH HUBBARD



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Happy Surprises





SOPHIE SAID GOOD-BYE HURRIEDLY

HAPPY SURPRISES

TOLD FROM THE FRENCH OF MADAME DE SÉGUR

By
JULIA OLCOTT

Introduction by
LOUIS AUGUSTE LOISEAUX, B.ès S.
Officier d'Académie



Illustrated by
ELEANORE MINEAH HUBBARD


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THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Today, the great oceans of the world, instead of separating Nations, are drawing them always closer together. Never again can Nations be strangers to one another.

The happy, human child-nature, too, is the same the wide world over; and so we hope that these French girls and boys, who come to us in English dress, may receive the friendliest of welcomes from our children.

Julia Olcott.

INTRODUCTION

It is too often believed in America that French literature is "for adults only," and that it is lacking in juvenile fiction. That such an opinion should have been generally accepted may be due to the fact, that too few of the best children's stories in French have been made available in this country, or that they have come here only after passing through other European countries, as for instance the many inimitable fairy stories such as "Sleeping Beauty," "Red Riding Hood," and "Hop o' My Thumb," which owe their literary charm to Charles Perrault, and are often attributed to other writers.

During the second part of the last century, two storytellers gave great delight to millions of young readers, and incidentally to older ones: Jules Verne and Madame de Ségur. Jules Verne's "VOYAGES EXTRAORDINAIRES" are known over the entire world; Madame de Ségur's reputation, however, has been limited almost entirely to France.

Sophie Rostopschine (1799-1874) was the daughter of Count Feodor Rostopschine, governor of Moscow, who is said to have given the orders for the burning of that city when Napoleon the First had just occupied it, thus hastening the disastrous retreat of the "Grande Armée." She married Count Eugène de Ségur, Peer of France, and spent the rest of her life in France, mainly at the Chateau

des Nouettes in Normandy, and in Paris. At the age of nearly sixty, and after being for many years an invalid and confined to a chaise-longue, she found relief for physical and other ills by writing stories for the enjoyment and profit of her grandchildren; thus, before Victor Hugo had published his "ART D'ÊTRE GRAND PÈRE," she had put into practice "l'Art d'être Grand'Mère."

The success of her first book NOUVEAUX CONTES DE FÉES POUR LES PETITS ENFANTS (1857) led her to contribute a volume or more a year for fifteen years to the BIBLIOTHÈQUE ROSE ILLUSTRÉE, a children's series published by Hachette of Paris. The volumes of that collection were often selected for prizes in schools, so that very few children in those days did not read one or more of Madame de Ségur's stories. Many small hearts and minds have been moved by the MALHEURS DE SOPHIE, amused by the MÉMOIRES D'UN ANE, delighted by the pranks of UN BON PETIT DIABLE, or deeply stirred by Général Dourakine.

These various stories are a succession of miniature dramas, presented in a way easily understood by younger minds. Like the Fables of good La Fontaine, they also aim to teach a moral, but that point as a rule is not overstressed, even if at the end all good children are generously rewarded and naughty ones justly punished. Besides the purely imaginary adventures making up a large part of the stories, these show also a keen observation and portrayal of human nature on the part of the Countess, and many local types of her picturesque Normandy are found skillfully outlined side by side with other characters for which she had to rely on the Russian souvenirs of her own youth.

The pages of the present volume are largely drawn from LES PETITES FILLES MODÈLES (1858) and LES VACANCES (1859), two of the earlier works of Madame de Ségur. Preserving well the simplicity and charm of the original, it is to be hoped that Mrs. Olcott's translation may prove as entertaining for American children as the French version has for French boys and girls during many years.

In this age of machinery, of speed and sophistication, it may indeed prove a blessing for the young generation to pause awhile, to become interested in things of the past, to hear of other and different customs and to learn, indirectly perhaps and while being amused, that there is still an important place in a child's world for refined sentiments, deeds of kindness as well as of courage, and for the enjoyment of the simple life.

Louis Auguste Loiseaux

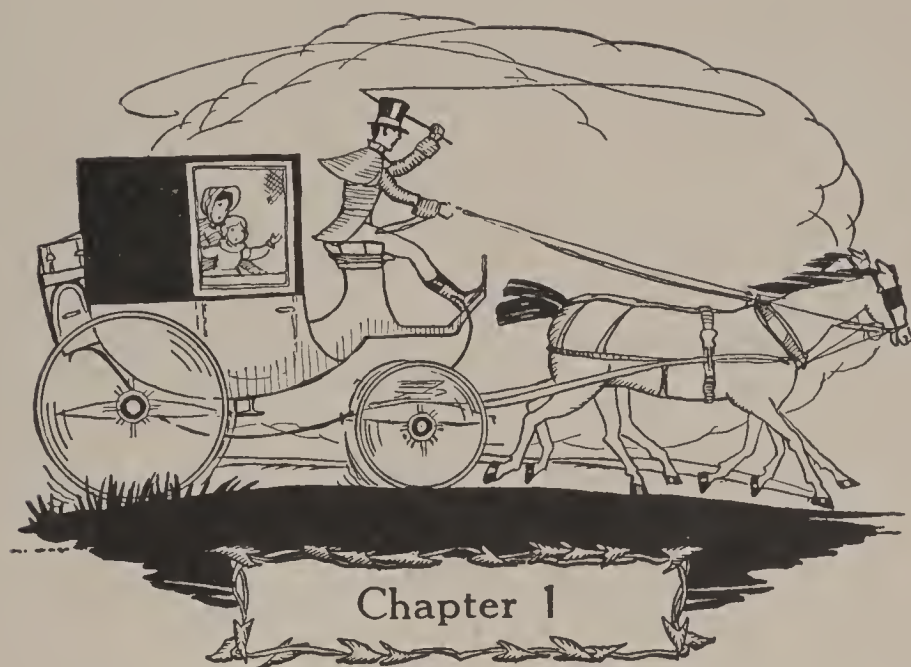


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"THIS ONE IS ALL RIGHT," SAID THE MAN



MARGUERITE

The First Surprise!

In all France—yes in all the world—there never lived two dearer little sisters than Camilla and Madeleine de Fleurville.

They never spoke a cross word to each other. Camilla loved to play. Picnics and parties on the lawn were her delight. And often when she awoke in the morning, she would say to herself:

“O! I wish I might dance and sing all day long!”

Madeleine loved to keep house for her own



Happy Surprises

dolls, and to make their pretty dresses. She was always busy, for she took care of Camilla's dolls, too.

"Poor dears!" she said. "They have only one dress apiece, and their pillowcases have no ruffles. I must adopt them!" And so she did.

One morning when Camilla was standing by the window, longing to be out in the sunshine, she exclaimed:

"Madeleine! It is perfectly lovely out of doors. Suppose we take a walk."

"O yes! I'll be glad to go. If you call Lisette, I'll get Beauty," and Madeleine ran for her pet doll.

Lisette was the children's nurse, and was always ready to please them.

"Where shall we go?" asked Lisette.

"Let's go to the highroad to watch the carriages pass, shall we, Madeleine?" said Camilla.

Lisette hesitated. "We must be very careful if we go there," said she. "The men are working on the road, and have left a deep ditch. Perhaps if we wait till to-morrow, they will have filled it in."



Marguerite

"No, no! Lisette! Let's go now!" cried Camilla. "We'll keep on the grass. Come, Madeleine!"

Lisette was willing. They all went down the broad path to the highroad. Lisette pushed open the iron gate, and they stepped out on the grassy bank that sloped to the ditch.

"Don't slip, children," warned Lisette. "The men haven't yet carried away all the stones."

"We'll take care that nothing happens to Beauty," said Madeleine.

Soon they found a pleasant spot to stand on, and a safe bed of grass for the doll. No carriages were in sight, but before the children could feel disappointed, Lisette raised her finger.

"Listen! I hear something."

"Isn't some one calling?" asked Madeleine.

As she spoke a carriage drawn by two frightened horses came dashing around a bend in the road. The driver was trying to hold them in. A lady and a little girl were in the carriage, and the lady had thrown her arm around the child.



Happy Surprises

“Help! Help!” they were screaming.

Suddenly the horses made a sharp turn, threw the carriage into the ditch, and then broke away and went galloping down the road.

Camilla and Madeleine were too terrified to move. There were no more cries for help.

“O the poor people!” exclaimed Lisette. “They must be killed. Don’t cry, Miss Madeleine, perhaps they are only too frightened to call any more. I’ll try to open the carriage door myself.”

Just then two workmen came hurrying up. “Can we help?” they asked.

“Please—please—open the carriage door!” implored Lisette. “A lady and a little girl are in there. I’m afraid they are killed.”

One of the men forced open the door.

“The little one is all right. See, she is looking straight at me!” he said, and he lifted her out.

“Take her up on the bank,” said Lisette. “And, Miss Camilla, if you don’t mind sitting on the ground, we’ll lay her on the grass, and she can rest her head in your lap.”

“There—that’s all right,” said the man,



Marguerite

laying the little girl down. "I'll go back and help care for the lady. There's nothing the matter with this one." And he hurried away.

The little girl, who heard a strange voice, was startled. She raised her head and looked around.

"Mother! I want my Mother! Where is my Mother?"

"That good man is gone to take care of your Mother," said Camilla kissing her softly. "You'll stay a little while with me and my sister, won't you?"

"No! No! I want Mother! The bad horses ran away with my Mother!"

Madeleine, who was kneeling beside her and stroking her gently, said:

"O no, dear! The bad horses ran away alone. They didn't carry away your Mother. As soon as you are rested, we'll take a beautiful walk and find her. Won't you like that?"

The little girl was an affectionate child. She was so won by the kind words and ways of Camilla and Madeleine and by their sweet faces bending over her, that she would have gone with them anywhere.

"Lisette has run home," said Camilla.



Happy Surprises

"She will tell our Mothers that we are coming, and we will walk slowly."

They began to walk towards the house, sitting down every few minutes to rest. They were afraid that the little girl might be tired.

"Now will you tell us what your name is?" asked Madeleine.

"My name is Marguerite."

"And what is your Mother's name?"

"Her name is Mother."

"Yes, but what is her other name?"

"O yes, her name is Mother."

"The servants don't call her Mother, do they?" asked Madeleine.

"O no, they say Madame."

"Yes dear,—but Madame who?"

"No," corrected Marguerite, "not Madame Who—only Madame."

"Never mind, Madeleine," whispered Camilla. "She is too little. She doesn't understand. But, now, Marguerite, tell us where you were going, when those bad horses made you fall into the ditch."

"I was going to see my aunt. I don't like my aunt, she's cross. I want to stay with Mother and with you."



Marguerite

She was holding Camilla's hand as she spoke, and she lifted it to her lips and kissed it. Then she looked at Camilla and Madeleine so sweetly, that they could not help hugging her.

"And what are your names?" she asked.

"I am Camilla, and my sister is Madeleine."

"Then you will be my little mothers, won't you? Mother Camilla and Mother Madeleine! You won't be my aunts, will you?"

"No, indeed!" Camilla said.

And Madeleine laid her doll in Marguerite's arms, adding:

"See! You may have Beauty to keep for your own child. But here we are at home, and there is Lisette."

Lisette, the maid, was always glad to have something fresh to tell. This time she was running fast, for she could hardly wait to say all she knew.

"The men brought the lady here, and I walked beside her. She isn't badly hurt. The Doctor says a shock like that would make any woman faint. Her name is Madame de Rosbourg. It was engraved on her silver-



Happy Surprises

mounted bag that was in the carriage, and marked on the trunks strapped to the back of it. She is asking for Marguerite this minute. Come on, all of you!"

The three little girls followed Lisette up the wide stairs and through the hall that led to the guest room. There the lady was lying on a couch, and Madame de Fleurville was sitting beside her.

Camilla and Madeleine stayed in the doorway, while Marguerite tip-toed in and stood close to her mother.

"Poor Mother! Does your head ache?" she whispered.

"Yes, dear, very badly."

"Then I'll stay with you all the time."

"O no, dear, go with your little friends. They are so kind to let you stay with them."

"Yes, Mother, they are so good. Madeleine gave me her doll, and they are not my friends at all—they are my little mothers."

Madame de Rosbourg smiled and closed her eyes, and Madame de Fleurville said gently:

"Come back by and by, my child. But now



Marguerite

go with your little mothers so that your grown-up mother may sleep and get well."

Marguerite kissed her mother, and ran away with Camilla and Madeleine, clasping a hand of each.

"Come to our playroom. You may play with any toy you like," said Camilla.

But when Marguerite came to the playroom, she did not know what to choose.

"Oh! Oh!—the darling dolls—there's one as big as I—and here are two more! How pretty they are! That one in bed is sick just like Mother!—and the sweet little dog! He looks alive! How thick his hair is! And—Oh! Oh! Oh!—just look at the lovely dishes and cups and spoons and forks and knives! And the wardrobe with all those dresses and shoes and stockings! And the bus full of passengers! They all have their hats on!"

"Come! We'll make the bus go!" she exclaimed, dragging it into the garden.

And Camilla and Madeleine, as they watched her running through the paths and over the grass, were as happy as Marguerite herself—till—till—the bus turned over! The dolls tumbled out on each other, and the hats



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flew everywhere. Poor little Marguerite wrung her hands.

“What shall I do? I’ve broken your bus! I’ll never do it again!”

“Don’t cry,” said Camilla. “We’ll open the door and put the travelers all back with their hats on. Mother will have another glass set in the windows.”

Things were quickly in order; Marguerite was comforted and began to play with the bus again, but very carefully.

Evening came. And after Lisette had undressed their tired little guest and tucked her snugly into bed, Camilla and Madeleine sat beside her till her eyes were shut.

Then Madeleine whispered:

“Camilla—now we know just how Mother put us to sleep!”





Chapter 2

THE BIRTHDAY FLOWERS

The Second Surprise!

Several weeks passed. Marguerite and her mother were still at Fleurville. Then one day the Doctor said to Madame de Rosbourg:

"I can say good-bye to you now, for you are perfectly well. You do not need me any more," and he departed.

Now Madame de Fleurville had noticed that as the patient grew stronger, she became sadder. The day after the Doctor was gone, she found her in tears.



Happy Surprises

“Dear friend,” exclaimed Madame de Fleurville, “tell me what is the matter. Why are you so unhappy?”

“It is because I must go away from you. Nobody was ever kind to me in my life except my husband. When I lost him, I lost my only friend. You have been another friend—so unspeakably kind—and now I must leave you.”

“But why should you leave me?” Madame de Fleurville answered very quickly and very earnestly. “Why cannot we live together? Your little Marguerite is perfectly happy with my children. I do not know what they will do without her. Why not stay with us?”

Madame de Rosbourg leaned back in her chair. She was too surprised and happy for words.

“We should be too much trouble,” was all she could murmur.

“Not at all—you will be no trouble. I am very lonely since my husband died in the war, five years ago. I have lived all alone. It is only since I have known you, that I have been really happy. It seems as if we were made to live together. The ship your husband



The Birthday Flowers

sailed in has never been heard from, and there seems no hope. That is settled, is it not—you will stay?” added Madame de Fleurville, holding out her hand.

Madame de Rosbourg took the hand in both of her own.

“It is settled!” said she. And this time she was not crying, she was smiling.

“How happy the children will be! I must tell them,” and Madame de Fleurville hurried out to find them.

They were helping Marguerite to make a scrap-book. Madame de Fleurville sat down among them like another girl.

“I have something to tell you—a surprise so good that you will never guess what it is! Just listen. Marguerite and her mother are never going away from us.”

Camilla and Madeleine dropped their scissors and paste.

“Do you mean, Mother, that they will stay with us always?”

It seemed too good to be true!

Marguerite threw her arms around Madame de Fleurville’s neck. Madame de Fleurville held her close, while she said:



Happy Surprises

“Now listen, children. Marguerite is much younger than you—she is not even seven years old! You must always give her good advice and set her a good example.”

“Of course, Mother!” said Camilla. “We shall bring her up just as you brought us up. Are we not her little mothers? I’ll teach her to read and write, and Madeleine will teach her to sew and keep things tidy. Won’t you, Madeleine?”

“Yes, indeed! But she is such a dear, she will never be naughty.”

“Oh, I’ll always be good! I’ll do everything you tell me to,” cried Marguerite.

“Then, Marguerite,” said Camilla, “will you go into the garden now? You’ll be sick if you don’t breathe fresh air, and you’ll lose your red cheeks.”

“O little Mother Camilla! Please let me stay with you. I love you so much.”

But Camilla led her to the door, saying:

“You have promised to do everything we ask. Madeleine has asked you three times to take a walk in the garden, and each time you have said, ‘Wait a minute.’ You may come back in half an hour.”



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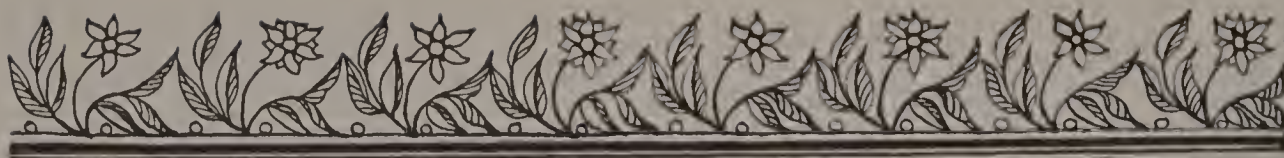
Marguerite looked beseechingly at Madeleine, who did not raise her head. Marguerite saw that she must obey. But she went very slowly.

Madame de Fleurville had given her a little watch that was once Camilla's. Marguerite always wore it. Now she kept looking at it and counting the minutes.

"Oh, how long it takes to make half an hour!" she whispered. "I don't see why Camilla made me come here. Madeleine would have let me stay. She always lets me do what I want. How I love Madeleine! But I love Camilla too. They are so good to me! I wish I could do something for them. I know! I know what! I'll sweep their flower-garden and make it clean."

But when she came to their garden, she thought of something else—something so much better that she was enchanted.

"How many flowers there are in their garden! And how beautiful! I'll pick them all. They will make a bouquet for their room. How sweet it will smell! And how glad they will be!"



Happy Surprises

She gathered up the hem and the corners of her smock.

“This will make a splendid bag. If I hold it tight, I can’t lose a flower. Not one will shake out. I shall pick everything!”

And she did, seizing buds and blossoms, stems and all.

“I’ll press them down good and hard. Oh, how pleased they’ll be!”

Never was Marguerite happier than when she ran to Camilla and Madeleine.

“Look, Camilla! Look, Madeleine! See what I’ve brought. I got them on purpose for you.”

They laughed when they saw the crushed flowers that Marguerite was taking by handfuls out of her bag.

“Where did you get them, Marguerite?”

“In your garden, every one!”

“In our garden? Do you mean that you got those flowers in our garden?” cried Camilla and Madeleine together.

“Yes, I got every one of them there, and the buds too.”

Camilla and Madeleine looked at each other. For weeks they had been caring for



The Birthday Flowers



"SEE, I HAVE PICKED ALL YOUR FLOWERS," SAID MARGUERITE

those flowers, and now they were gone! They had not the heart to scold Marguerite, who had come so joyfully to make them happy. But the little girl saw that something was wrong. They did not give her the thanks and kisses she had expected.

"I thought you would be so glad!" she cried.

"You have made us very sorry," answered Camilla. "We were keeping those flowers for Mother's birthday, the day after tomor-



Happy Surprises

row. Now we have nothing to give her. But don't cry, dear," she added. "We know you meant to make us happy, and we'll not scold you. Don't cry any more! We are not angry, we love you." And Camilla said what she could to comfort her.

"You are so good to me! I have made you sorry when I meant to make you glad. I'll never do it again — never — never! Oh, Mother!"

Madame de Rosbourg stood in the doorway astonished to see her little daughter crying like a baby in Camilla's arms.

"Marguerite! What is the matter? Have you been naughty?"

"Oh, no, Madame!" answered Madeleine quickly. "We are only trying to comfort her."

"But why are you comforting her? What has happened?"

"Because—because—" Madeleine hesitated. She did not know just what to say, and Camilla added:

"We are comforting her because—" here she too hesitated.



The Birthday Flowers

“Marguerite, tell me yourself what is the matter.”

“O, Mother! I have been naughty. But I didn’t mean to be. I picked all the flowers in their garden. I didn’t leave one for their Mother’s birthday. And they didn’t scold me as Aunt Jeanne does. They kissed me! I am sorry. Oh, I am so sorry!”

And Marguerite hid her face on Camilla’s shoulder.

Her mother did not reply, she seemed to be thinking. Then she said:

“Children dear, I am in a desperate hurry, and I cannot wait to talk. As soon as I come back, you must tell me more about it. I shall be gone only a little while.”

Then she called the coachman.

“Peter, I want you to take me to the florist in Moulins.”

Peter was very prompt.

“Yes, Madame, we’ll be there in no time. It isn’t quite a mile away.”

Moulins was a pretty little village, and there Madame de Rosbourg found the florist and the flowers.



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“I will take all these,” she said, pointing to the finest, gayest flowering plants. “I want them sent to Fleurville this evening after dark, and planted in the children’s garden for a surprise.”

“It shall be done, Madame! I’ll bring them at sundown, and plant them myself.”

“I’ll see that it’s done all right,” declared Lisette when she heard the secret. “The poor children will be so glad they’ll jump into the moon.”

While Madame de Rosbourg was gone to Moulins, the children ran to their garden hoping to find flowers enough to make a little bouquet. Not a single one was left.

“We’ll buy plants that will bloom later,” said Madeleine.

“Take my money to buy them! I have four francs,” exclaimed Marguerite. And she would have rushed into the house for her savings, but Camilla said:

“O no, dear! It would be better to give it to poor blind Adela in the village.”

“If you don’t have enough yourself, you’ll take mine, won’t you? Please say you will!” begged Marguerite.



The Birthday Flowers



MADAME DE ROSBOURG BUYS SOME FLOWERS

“Yes, indeed. But don’t think any more about it. Let’s get ready for the new flowers.”

Then all three began to work. Marguerite was gathering stalks and stems in her little wheelbarrow and rolling them away, Camilla and Madeleine were digging and raking, when Madame de Rosbourg came back.

“Such busy little gardeners! Flowers will bloom here again.” And she nodded and smiled. “But you are tired, and so am I. Let us rest under this chestnut tree while you tell me what flowers you are going to plant.”

The next morning when the children went into the garden, Camilla walked faster than the others, and was the first to reach the flower-bed. She stood still.



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It was full of flowers!

How did they get there?

“Madeleine! Marguerite! Come! Come!”

They came, but they did not stand still or keep still. O no! Such dancing about! Such astonishment! Such rejoicing!

They called their mothers. They 'called Lisette. Then they began to wonder.

“How did those flowers grow in one night?”

“I know,” said Marguerite solemnly, “They did not grow at all. An Angel brought them.”

“You are right, dear child,” answered Madame de Fleurville. “Your angel mother brought them to comfort you, and to thank



The Birthday Flowers

Camilla and Madeleine for loving you too much to scold you.”

That was indeed a good day! But the birthday was even better.

“Never can we forget this birthday,” said the three little girls—for then they wore wreaths of roses and sang and danced while they presented bouquets, large and beautiful, to the two mothers.





HOW SOPHIE CAME TO STAY

A Big Surprise!

One day Madame de Fleurville said to Madame de Rosbourg:

"I don't think I have ever told you about Madame Fichini. She is the widow of an old friend, whose first wife I liked very much. The first wife was drowned in returning from America, and left a little girl. I have never cared for Madame Fichini, this second wife, but for the sake of my friend's child, I have kept in touch with her. She has just invited



How Sophie Came to Stay

us all for dinner today. I can't imagine why. You'll come with me, won't you?"

"Of course I'll be glad to go, for I am curious. Children, would you like to go, too?"

"Yes, indeed, Mother! We all love Sophie, and we are sorry for her. She never has any good times as we do."

"I wish Beauty could go, but she isn't invited," sighed Marguerite.

Madeleine laughed. "Never mind, she'll be safe at home. She can't fall and break her nose."

"But she ought to have been invited just the same, for she never goes anywhere."

It was a beautiful afternoon. They enjoyed the drive, and Madame Fichini with Sophie was waiting for them on the terrace.

"I am delighted to see you," she said. "The children may stay out here, while we mothers go inside and talk about Sophie. I have to leave France for a few months, and I want to lend her to you, if you will take her. Let us go inside and I shall tell you about it."

And she led the way into the drawing room. She was a very excitable little woman, and she said a great deal in a short time.



Happy Surprises

“What’s that your mother said, Sophie?” asked Marguerite.

“Does she want to give you to Mother?” asked Camilla.

They both spoke together, and Madeleine added:

“Where is she going?”

“I don’t know,” said Sophie. “A few days ago she said I must stay here with the maids while she visits in Italy. Perhaps she is going there now.”

“Shall you be sorry if she goes away?” asked Camilla.

“Not if I can stay with you. I get so lonesome here—I have nobody to play with but the cat, and she can’t talk.”

Sophie wiped her eyes and the little girls gathered around her. They kissed and comforted her, and in ten minutes they were all playing hide and seek, Sophie the gayest of the band. Presently she exclaimed:

“Oh! I am so thirsty.”

“Why don’t you take a drink?” asked Marguerite.

“Because Mother never lets me drink between meals.”



How Sophie Came to Stay

“Can’t you have a drink of cold water even when you are thirsty?”

“No, not till dinner time, and then only one glass.”

“Oh, poor Sophie!” exclaimed Marguerite. “Poor, poor Sophie!”

In the meanwhile, Madame Fichini was saying to Madame de Fleurville:

“I feel that I am asking too much. But I must leave immediately and have not time to find a suitable boarding-school for Sophie.”

“You do not need to find one,” said Madame de Fleurville. “We shall be delighted to have Sophie with us, and I am sure she will be happy with the children.”

“I can’t thank you enough! How soon may I send her?”

“We shall be glad to take her home with us this evening,” answered Madame de Fleurville.

Madame Fichini clasped her hands.

“You are too kind! Too kind! I can’t tell you how grateful I am.” She hurried to the long window that opened on the terrace.

“Sophie! Sophie! Come here! Come here!”



Happy Surprises

Sophie came timidly. The other little girls followed her.

“You are going away this evening.”

Sophie’s face brightened.

“Oh! Oh!” she cried.

“Madame de Fleurville has invited you to visit her, while I am gone. It will be much better than staying with the servants. I hope that you will be very good and very obedient. Now come, let us all go in to dinner.”

The children were quiet while Madame Fichini talked of her Italian journey.

“When I come home, I shall invite all the neighbors to hear about my Italian trip. It will be charming!”

After dinner, the children went to the nursery to pack up Sophie’s doll and its wardrobe. It was not a pretty doll, and they decided to leave it at home.

“You may play with one of mine,” said Camilla.

Afterwards Madame de Fleurville asked that her carriage might be ordered.

“Carriage!” echoed Madame Fichini. “It is not yet eight o’clock.”



How Sophie Came to Stay

“Yes, but we ought to be at home before dark.”

“Why should you go before dark? The road is fine and there will be moonlight.”

“The children are too young to sit up late, and I am afraid that they will be tired.”

“But you know, Madame, that this is the last evening which we can spend together. The children may sit up for once, it won't hurt them. You agree with me, Madame de Rosbourg?”

“We are both careful that the children should keep early hours,” answered Madame de Rosbourg.

All the same they stayed a little longer.

Then the carriage came. The children were busy putting on their hats and chattering like little magpies. Sophie was the first to reach the door. She was afraid that they might forget her. It was a jolly party that was packed into the big carriage.

“Good-bye children! Good-bye everybody!” called Madame Fichini, waving her hand.

They all called back, “Good-bye! Good-bye!” as they drove off.



Happy Surprises

They were well on their way when they heard a loud shout:

“Stop! Stop!”

“That’s to take me back!” thought Sophie.

The driver reined in his horse.

A footman came running up and opened the carriage door. He was panting, he had run so fast.

“Madame says—that she forgot—to put—Miss Sophie’s clothes—in the carriage. She’ll send them tomorrow—unless Miss wants to come home.”

“Thank you! Thank you, Antoine!” exclaimed Sophie, and in her excitement she held out both hands to the man. “I am sorry you hurried so, but I am going right on. Good-bye! Good-bye!”

Madame de Fleurville laughed.

“Thank Madame Fichini, Antoine, and tell her we are already so far on our way that we shall not stop. Miss Sophie may wear Miss Camilla’s clothes till her own arrive.”

Then the carriage drove on.

“Won’t that be fun!” cried the children.

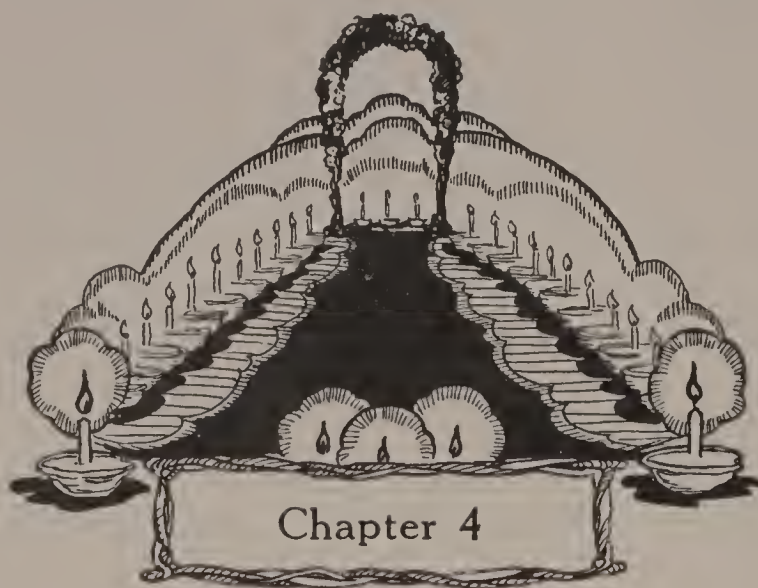
“One day Sophie can be Camilla, and the next day she can be Madeleine.”



How Sophie Came to Stay

And it was fun when in the morning Sophie appeared at breakfast dressed in Camilla's blue dress and ribbon bow. She felt queer too, not at all like Sophie, when she sat down with Camilla and Madeleine and Marguerite at the breakfast table in the nursery.





NUT-SHELLS

A Bright Surprise!

For more than a year, Sophie lived with Camilla and Madeleine. And, though she did not hear from Madame Fichini, she was happy in her new home.

Madame de Fleurville and Madame de Rosbourg loved their children, but they did not spoil them. They taught them to be kind and loving to one another, and Sophie grew to be like them, a sweet generous child.

She was reading one morning, when Madame de Fleurville came into the room holding an open letter.



Nut-Shells

“This is from your mother,” she said.

Sophie sprang up, then sank back. She did not speak, but she trembled. Madame de Fleurville saw it.

“Don’t be afraid,” said she. “Your mother is not coming to take you away, for she is married to Count Blagowski. You are never going to live with her again. She asks me to put you in a boarding-school.”

Here Sophie grew pale, and looked beseechingly at Madame de Fleurville, who smiled and added:

“Unless I prefer to keep you with me! What do you say to that? Will you go to the best boarding-school in Paris? Or will you stay here and be my third daughter—Cammilla’s and Madeleine’s sister?”

Sophie could not speak. She was crying with joy.

“I know what you will choose!” smiled Madame de Fleurville. “I am sure that you will not leave those who love you. You will always live with us. Isn’t that so?”

“Oh, yes! Oh, yes! Please keep me with you and love me and let me love you, as if you were my real born mother. I will try



Happy Surprises

with my whole heart to deserve—" she stopped suddenly.

"What is the matter, my child?"

"I hadn't remembered that it will cost a great deal to keep me."

"Don't be troubled about that. You have enough money of your own to pay your expenses a hundred times over. I can tell you something that will please you—you will have enough money all your life long to be able to help the poor and needy."

Sophie kissed Madame de Fleurville and ran to announce the grand news. Such rejoicings! They took hands and danced around. Then they sang till Lisette came running.

"What are you doing? I have never heard such a racket. What is it for?"

"O Lisette! If you only knew, you would dance too. Sophie is going to live with us always. Madame Fichini is married to Count Blagowski. Ha! Ha! Hurrah!" and Marguerite drew Lisette into the circle.

Then there was a noise that brought the servants one after another to know what it meant. All went away glad, for they liked Sophie. At last the little girls were tired



Nut-Shells



THEY DANCED TOGETHER MERRILY

enough to rest; Lisette was, also, but she was not too tired to talk.

“Children,” she said, “don’t you know that when people have great celebrations they illuminate? Let’s celebrate for Sophie tonight.”

“But how can we do it?” asked Camilla. “We need lights.”

“We’ll make them, of course.”

“How can we make them? With what?”

“With English walnut shells and yellow wax and candlewicks.”



Happy Surprises

“How clever you are, Lisette!” And Marguerite threw her arms around Lisette’s neck.

Sophie, Camilla, and Madeleine almost smothered her with kisses, but she escaped to her own room. They all rushed after her, but they heard the door bang and the key turn.

“Lisette! Lisette! Please open the door!” they cried.

“Dear, good Lisette, open the door! We want to speak to you!”

“Please, Lisette, only one more little dance!”

“Lisette, won’t you let us in?—just this once?”

“Just suppose you break down the door, while I break something else!” answered Lisette.

And then they heard a noise that never stopped—crack—crack—crack—crack!

“What is she doing there?” asked Sophie in a low voice.

“I have an idea!” whispered Camilla. “Let’s go softly outside under her window. It isn’t very high. She isn’t expecting us and she won’t have time to hide.”

“That’s a good idea,” agreed Sophie. “But



Nut-Shells

don't make a sound. Come down on tip-toe and don't speak a word."

They went softly down, out, around the house, and under Lisette's window. It was a little too high for them, but at a sign from Camilla they scrambled up the trellis which was fastened to the wall. In an instant their four heads were at the window.

Lisette screamed and threw her apron over the table, but it was too late. The children had seen.

"Nuts! Nuts!" they cried. "You're cracking nuts for our illumination."

"Well, then, so long as you have found out, come and help with the shells."

Down the trellis, around the house, and up to Lisette's room they ran. They worked with such good will that more than two hundred nut-shells were soon ready.

"Good!" said Lisette. "Now I'll tell you what we'll do. In a corner of the store-room there's a big chest full of tiny standards that were made for tapers in old days. There must be a thousand of them in that chest. We'll bring out some and fit our shells into them. But first we'll go to the kitchen and get other



Happy Surprises



THEY PEEPED INTO LISETTE'S WINDOW

things from Lina, and borrow a frying pan to melt the wax.”

The little girls were enchanted, and quickly brought all that was needed. They melted wax, poured it into the shells and fitted them into the standards.

“They are just fat little candlesticks and the shells fit in like tapers,” said Marguerite as she pressed bits of candlewick into the melted wax, which cooled and hardened.



Nut-Shells

“We’ve nothing more to do now,” Lisette said, “but put them outdoors wherever we can find places. We’ll take two of these long baskets that Blenda uses for starched dresses. It needs two to carry a basket—one of you for each end. I’ll go along and set out the candlesticks, that will take time too. It won’t be done in a minute! Then after dark, we’ll illuminate.”

The mothers were in the drawing-room when the little girls carried in their baskets.

“What have you there?” asked Madame de Rosbourg.

“A celebration for Sophie, Mother. Madame Fichini is married, and we are going to illuminate because we can keep Sophie.”

“Those little shells will make very pretty torches. Where did you get them?”

“We made them, Mother. Lisette showed us how and we made them. Now we are going to get them ready to light tonight.”

“We will help you set them out,” said both mothers.

And they enjoyed helping so that they said to each other, “I believe we feel as young as they do!”



Happy Surprises

It seemed as if the evening would never come, and dinner had never been so long. But at last Marguerite said:

“I see a star!”

Then they ran out, mothers as well as children, and when their work was done and the wicks lighted, they stood still to admire. The nut-shell candlesticks were so close to each other that the lights made long sparkling chains, with here and there clusters of little stars. Marguerite was delighted.

“It is like Fairyland!” she exclaimed.

And the mothers, as they went back to the drawing-room, agreed:

“It is really pretty!”

Afterwards there were games led by Lisette—hide and seek—hunt the slipper—where is the queen’s ring? Through rooms and corners of rooms, halls, stairs, and closets—such screaming and laughing! Such racing and chasing! At last came the end of Sophie’s jubilee, a supper of cakes and creams and fruits.

“You must come to Sophie’s supper, Lisette!” the little girls said.

“Oh, no! No!” and Lisette shook her head.



Nut-Shells

But they felt so sure that she was longing for peaches and grapes, that they coaxed her to the table. They heaped her plate till it could hold no more. Then Camilla filled a large paper bag.

“This is for your little niece,” she said.

Lisette smiled. “Thank you! Thank you, Miss Camilla! You are always kind.”

That night Sophie said:

“Do you know, Marguerite, every night and every morning I have prayed that I might never go away, and now see how I am answered!”





A PICNIC-WALK

The White Cottage Surprise!

“Let us all take a long walk,” said Madame de Fleurville. “The day is so bright and cool. Suppose we go through the woods by the road that passes the mill.”

Camilla and Madeleine were delighted.

“I don’t like to go there,” pouted Marguerite. “Jeanette the miller’s girl throws stones at everybody.”



A Picnic-Walk

"I don't think she will throw them, if we are with you," said Madame de Fleurville. "We mean to make it a picnic-walk and eat our luncheon in the woods."

They had reached the mill, when Marguerite exclaimed:

"There she is, peeping through the attic window!"

But that was all they saw of Jeanette.

The mothers enjoyed the quiet of the woods, while the children wandered on till they came to an old oak tree. The ground was covered with acorns, and the children were filling their pockets when they heard a little noise. They stopped. They listened.

"Some one is crying. Perhaps it is Jeanette," and all four children darted into the woods.

Behind a clump of bushes they found a girl. She had flung herself on the ground and was moaning:

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! What shall I do?"

"Poor thing!" whispered Madeleine. "How miserable she is!"

The girl raised her head and still crying scrambled to her feet.



Happy Surprises

"Don't go away. We won't hurt you," said Camilla.

"We only want to know why you are crying," added Madeleine.

Their voices were so gentle and full of pity, that the girl fell to sobbing again. Sophie and Madeleine almost crying themselves, begged her to tell them what was the matter.

"We have been here only a month," sobbed the girl. "My mother is so sick that she can't work any more. I hoped the mill people would buy my best dress, but they drove me away, and the girl there threw stones at me."

"That was Jeanette!" exclaimed Marguerite.

"Yes! that's what her mother called her when she told her to stop. I wouldn't care if we had enough to eat. Mother is so sick and weak, and hasn't had anything to eat since yesterday."

Camilla was shocked.

"Nothing to eat since yesterday! And haven't you had anything either?"

"Oh, I'm not sick. Besides, I picked some berries on the way to the mill."

"Berries!" echoed Camilla. "Mother has a



A Picnic-Walk

whole lunch basket full of rolls and plums. We'll bring some to you now."

"Yes! Yes!" exclaimed Sophie and Madeleine in one breath. And away the two ran to bring the basket.

While Sophie and Madeleine were carrying the basket to the girl, Camilla and Marguerite hurried to the mothers, to explain how they had found the poor girl crying, and about the sick mother.

"She has had nothing to eat since yesterday," added Camilla.

It was Madame de Fleurville's turn to be shocked.

"What suffering!" she exclaimed. "I wonder who they are. We know all the villagers. They must be strangers."

"They are, Mother. They have been here only a month."

"Come, let us see what we can do for them," said Madame de Fleurville.

They found that though Sophie and Madeleine had brought the basket, the young girl would not open it.

"You must eat something," said Madame de Fleurville. gently.



Happy Surprises

"If you please, may I carry it all home to my mother, for she is very sick?"

"We will go with you then," said Madame de Fleurville kindly, taking the basket for she could see that the girl had not strength even to lift it. "Now show us where you live, and tell us your name. What is your mother's name?"

"I am Lucie. My mother's name is Françoise Viret, but everybody calls her Mother Frigate."

"Why do they call her that?"

"Because she is a sailor's wife."

Madame de Rosbourg was interested now.

"Where is your father? Is he not with you?"

"No, Madame. That is why we are so poor. Father went away a long time ago. They say his ship was lost and everybody was drowned."

Madame de Rosbourg's voice trembled as she asked:

"On what ship did your father sail?"

"It was Commander de Rosbourg's ship. The Sybille was its name."

"My husband's vessel!" cried Madame de



A Picnic-Walk

Rosbourg controlling herself. "Poor child! Poor child! Take me to your mother. I must see her at once."

Lucie did not understand, but she felt that some good fortune was come to her mother. She led the way as fast as she could.

It was a woodcutter's hut, an abandoned cabin so dark that Madame de Rosbourg at first was not able to see that a woman was lying on a heap of moss, and that there was no furniture, not even a chair or table.

"Sit down beside your mother," she said as she divided the rolls and plums. "They are starving," she thought, as she watched them eat. But she said nothing till every crumb was gone. Then she explained why she was there.

"I am the wife of Commander de Rosbourg, and I will take care of you, Françoise. You need never worry about yourself or Lucie, for you shall have all you need. But now the first thing is for you to leave this wretched place."

She gave them no time to recover from their astonishment, or even to speak. She hurried to Madame de Fleurville who was waiting outside with the children.



Happy Surprises

“Never in your life have you seen such misery! Will you come with me this minute to look at a little cottage that is to rent? We passed it today. If you think that it will do for these people, I will rent it now. Come, children, I want you to see it.”

It was a cottage freshly painted. The White House, they called it afterwards. There were three rooms, a cellar, an attic, and a garden full of flowers and fruit.

“It is just the place,” declared Madame de Fleurville, and Madame de Rosbourg said:

“While I go and arrange with the owner, will you try to send here what they will need for tonight? Tomorrow, I shall get everything necessary.”

Madame de Fleurville and the children went directly home. A pony cart for Françoise and a wagon for moving the things she would need for the night, were ordered.

“We’ll collect them together all ourselves, and Nicaise can put them in the wagon,” said the little girls eagerly.

They gathered together cups and saucers, casseroles, loaves of bread, dishes and a bottle of hair tonic, a kettle of soup and a mouse-



A Picnic-Walk

trap, brooms, brushes and rugs, a three-pound roll of butter, a supply of vegetables of all kinds, and a basket of eggs.

When Lisette came she laughed so long and so loud that Sophie and Marguerite were hurt. Camilla and Madeleine grew very red.

“Why do you laugh, Lisette? I don’t see anything funny in getting comforts for the poor woman,” said Camilla.

“You don’t suppose that your Mother will send such a lot of useless things?” Lisette said, and she laughed again.

“It seems to me that they are all useful,” said Sophie.

“But Lisette, you are sending mattresses, and sheets, and pillowcases, and coverlets,” objected Marguerite.

“Of course, because they need them for their beds. But just let me see about it,” she said soothingly. “Joseph! Here, Joseph!” she called to the boy who was waiting for orders. “Here, Nicaise! Come and help Joseph put this little stand in the wagon, and two chairs, and this bundle of bedding. Now a loaf of bread and this pat of butter. Keep it well wrapped up— Two glasses and two plates—



Happy Surprises

Oh yes!—this candlestick and two candles. And, Nicaise, don't take the things off the wagon till Madame comes and tells you where to put them."

"May we go back with Lisette, Mother?" asked Camilla. "Then we can see Lucie and her mother come. How surprised they will be!"

"Of course you may go, and tell Lisette to get whatever is needed to make a good supper."

"And may we take one of our dresses for Lucie, and shoes and stockings?"

"Certainly you may. Take whatever she needs, and a dressing-gown of mine for Françoise. Madame de Rosbourg is going to buy their clothes."

The little girls, each carrying a parcel and led by Lisette with the dressing-gown over her arm, went gaily to the White House. Madame de Rosbourg was there before them.

"Nicaise and Joseph have put everything in place," she said. "Now what do you need?"

"Wood to heat the soup," said Lisette.

"Salt to put in it," said Camilla.



A Picnic-Walk

“Spoons to eat it with,” said Madeleine.

“Dishes for eggs, and plates for butter,” said Sophie.

“And six peach tartines,” said Marguerite.

“Lisette will go to the village and buy whatever is needed,” said Madame de Rosbourg.

“Yes, indeed, I will, Madame! Just wait, children, and I’ll be back in a jiffy.”

She returned breathless.

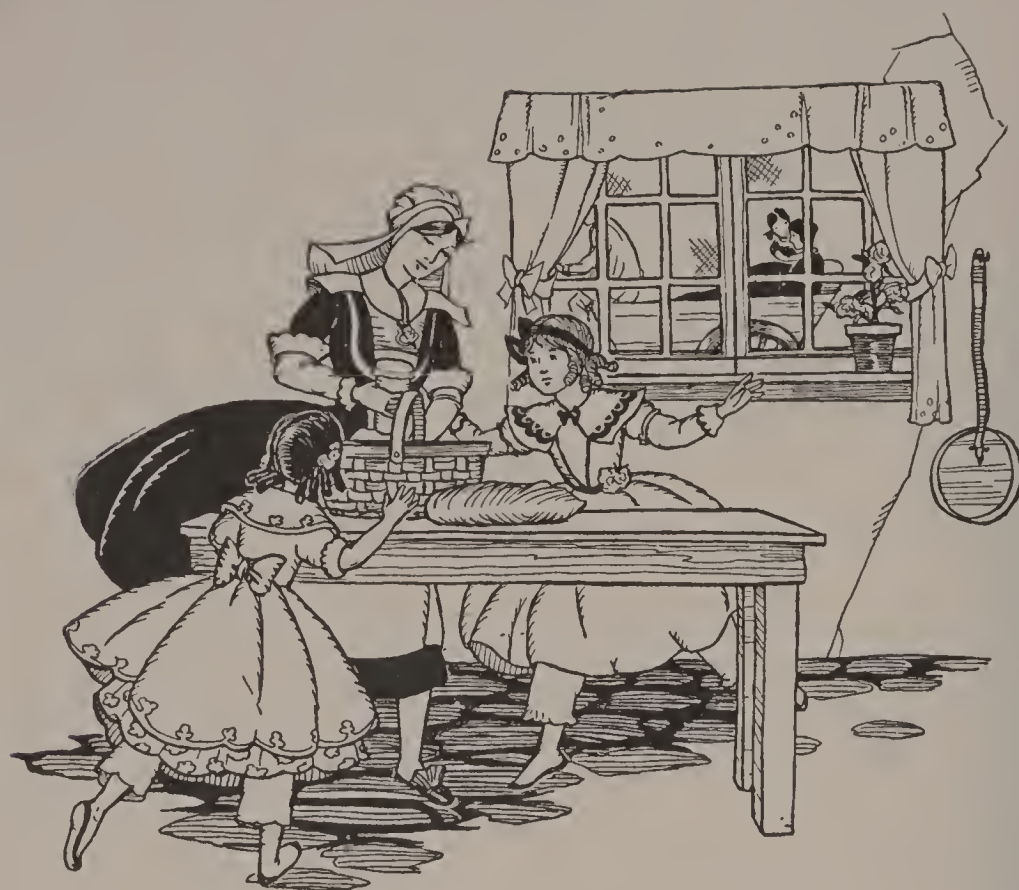
“I’ve brought it all, and a milk pitcher—the children forgot that—and the sugar too! Here’s the cart!”

It stopped before the door, and Madame de Rosbourg and Lisette helped Françoise into the house. She could not speak, but her eyes thanked them. When Lucie saw her mother in a soft bed, her face grew radiant, and she would have thrown herself upon her knees before Madame de Rosbourg.

“No, Lucie, do not thank me,” Madame de Rosbourg said. “Thank the good Lord who led me to find you. And now do not excite your mother. She shall have nourishing food, and will soon be well again. Here is the soup.”



Happy Surprises



"QUICKLY! HERE COMES FRANÇOISE!"

It was not only soup, but a whole supper! And when Lucie had finished eating, Marguerite whispered:

"Come into the other room with us."

Then nobody could have told who was the happiest—the little girls while they were dressing Lucie, or Lucie when she was dressed and showed herself to her mother, who exclaimed:

"Come closer! I want to look at you. How pretty you are! If only your poor father could



A Picnic-Walk

see you now." And she fell back and buried her face in the pillow.

Madame de Rosbourg tried to cheer her.

"Tomorrow, Françoise, I will go to town to buy new furniture and clothing, and whatever else you need. The children and I will come often to see you. If you want anything, you must tell us. When you are well I will give you work to do, but now you must eat and sleep and grow strong."

Françoise wiped her eyes.

"We shall not be cold and hungry any more! Sometime I shall be able to work and thank these dear people," she thought, and was comforted.

Then Madame de Rosbourg called the children, and they went home to tell how happy they had made Lucie and her mother. They talked about it with Lisette when they went to bed. They dreamed of it that night. In the morning, their first thought was to go to the White House.

Madame de Fleurville went with them, for Madame de Rosbourg was already gone to town to buy what she had promised.

Françoise was sitting up, her bed was



Happy Surprises

made. Lucie had borrowed a broom from a little neighbor, and inside and outside the house was clean and pleasant.

Wood had been brought in and piled in the cellar, and when Madame de Fleurville had given the breakfast she had brought, Lucie began to cook it.

The children were satisfied, and went home to their lessons.

In the afternoon Madame de Rosbourg begged a holiday for them. The things she had bought were come.

"They may help put the White House in order," she said.

"I will send Lisette," added Madame de Fleurville, "for she is so clever and good natured."

When Lucie saw them all coming, she ran to meet them.

"We were never so happy in all our lives, since father went!" she cried. "My mother can't believe it. She says it is like a Fairy Surprise."



LOST IN A TREE

A Wild Animal Surprise!

Sophie was longing to make somebody happy.

"I wish I could find another poor woman like Françoise," she said to Mother Louffray, the gardener's wife.

"If that's all you want, Miss, you may get her this minute."

"Where is she? What is her name?"



Happy Surprises

“She’s down our road, and her name is Mother Luitain. Half the time she doesn’t earn enough money to buy bread and cheese. She isn’t a lazy woman either. She’s always busy, but she’s too old to work fast.”

“I wish I might see her. Is she far away?”

“No, Miss, you can be there in less than half an hour.”

Sophie said no more, but she had a plan, and she confided it to Marguerite. After telling her all she knew about Mother Luitain, she added:

“We’ll take care of her always. We’ll go today and give her every sou that we have left. Next week we’ll save some more.”

“Yes indeed! I’ll go with you,” said Marguerite. “We’ll go this minute if Mother says we may.”

Madame de Fleurville and Madame de Rosbourg were just leaving the house with Camilla and Madeleine. They heard the plan and were much pleased.

“I know where Mother Luitain lives,” said Madame de Fleurville. “I pass her little hut when I am in a hurry to get to the village. I had no idea she was so poor. Her place is



Lost In a Tree

always very neat. In future, you may look after her and make her your particular care."

The little girls took their pocketbooks and started off to find Mother Luitain. While stopping now and then to examine strange flowers and leaves, and sometimes sitting on the grass, they did not think of time nor notice that they were not keeping on the straight road. Instead they were crossing new paths and getting farther into the woods.

Suddenly Marguerite said:

"It seems to me that we are going very far. Are you sure that you know the way?"

"Yes, Mother Louffray told me just how to go."

But Sophie herself began to feel anxious, when a little later Marguerite asked:

"Shall we be there soon?"

"We must surely be there in a few minutes."

They walked on. The woods seemed to have no end. There was no house, no village.

"I'm tired," said Marguerite.

"So am I," said Sophie.

"It's long since we left, isn't it?"

Sophie made no answer. She was too



Happy Surprises

frightened and could not conceal her terror.

"Suppose we go back," proposed Marguerite.

"Oh yes! Oh yes! Let's go back."

"What is the matter, Sophie?"

"We are lost!" wailed Sophie. "I don't know the road. We are lost! We are lost!"

"Lost! Lost!" echoed Marguerite. "What will become of us?"

"I must have made a mistake where the paths cross each other. I don't know where we are." And Sophie wrung her hands.

Marguerite was so sorry for her, that she forgot her own alarm and grew brave.

"Don't cry! We'll find the way. We'll go back exactly as we came. They'll be worried about us at home, and they'll look for us."

Sophie followed Marguerite's advice and dried her tears. They went back as they had come, till they stopped where several paths running in different directions crossed one another.

"Which is the road?" asked Marguerite.

"I don't know. Perhaps the one there where moss is growing on the tree trunks."

"But there are two roads with moss on the



Lost In a Tree

trees, and I don't remember any moss at all on our road. Let's take the one that turns to the left."

They walked on. Neither spoke. Then Marguerite said:

"I'm very tired."

"So am I," sighed Sophie.

"My feet hurt horribly."

"Then let's sit, for I can't walk another step."

They sat down on the ground. Marguerite laid her head on her knees and cried softly. She hoped that Sophie would not hear her, for Sophie had said:

"It's all my fault. If it had not been for me, you would never have come here."

Kind little Marguerite would have hidden her tears. She raised her head.

"Let's go on," she said bravely.

"What will become of us, if we have to stay all night in these dreadful woods?" was the thought of both, but neither one said it.

"If only we could find some water!" exclaimed Sophie.

"There is a brook near here. I heard the



Happy Surprises

sound just now. Come and see," and Marguerite pushed through a tangle of bushes.

Sophie followed. There indeed was a brook, narrow but deep, with water as clear as crystal, and there they drank. The sun was setting. Soon it would be dark. Nobody came to look for them, nobody would think of looking so far. And now with their arms around each other, they sat crying together.

At last Sophie said:

"We must go back to the place we came from. Perhaps some one will pass and pick us up."

"But we'll scratch ourselves again on the thorns," Marguerite objected.

"We can't help it. We must be found. We can't stay here forever."

Marguerite sighed and followed Sophie, who said nothing but went ahead pushing through the bushes and thorny briars to keep them away from poor Marguerite.

When they reached the road they were afraid to follow it, and sat down under a tree.

Suddenly there was a creepy sound as though something was moving among the



Lost In a Tree

bushes. It came nearer and Marguerite felt a hot breathing on the back of her neck. She screamed as loud as she could scream, and Sophie screamed louder. Then there was a noise like snapping twigs, and they saw an animal run across the path and disappear in the woods.

Then came sounds as if wild beasts were close at hand—tramplings, gruntings, pantings.

The branches of the tree nearly touched the ground. The little girls seized them and up they went. No two squirrels ever climbed a tree so quickly as they climbed that one. They never stopped till they were high enough to be more than safe.

Then a wild boar and her family of eight young boars passed under the tree and went their way, leaving Sophie and Marguerite shivering and scarcely able to keep their hold on the branches.

All at once they heard wheels! Wheels not close by—but they heard them and forgot everything else.

The wheels came nearer and nearer—they could see the glimmer of a lantern—they



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could hear plainly a horse—the horse trotting and a man whistling.

“Help! Oh, help!” they cried.

The wheels stopped—so did the whistle, the driver was listening.

“Who on earth is calling?” muttered the man. “I don’t see a soul.”

Then he shouted, “Who is calling?”

“We! We are lost in the woods! Please save us! Save us!”

“Children’s voices, as true as I live!”

Then he shouted again, “Who are you?”

“I am Sophie!”

“I am Marguerite. Please — please — please—save us!”

“Where are you? I can’t save you, till I find you.”

“We are lost in the tree. We can’t get down.”

The man looked up.

“It’s true! They must be well scared!—Wait a minute!—I’ll take you down.”

Marguerite was on the nearest bough.

“How many of you are in this nest?” he asked as he lifted her carefully to the ground.

“We are only two.”



Lost In a Tree

“Good! That won’t take long. Number Two, be patient and wait till I get Number One down.”

He went slowly and put Marguerite in his cart, then climbed the tree for Sophie. When she was safe beside Marguerite he clambered into his own seat.

“Now where shall I take you? Where do you live and how did you get here?”

“We live at Fleurville—and we got lost when we were going to take care of old Mother Luitain.”

“Fleurville! Then you live at the big house, don’t you?”

“Yes, that is where we live. We are Marguerite de Rosbourg and Sophie Fichini.”

“Oh, ho! Then you belong to that good Madame de Rosbourg. How did your mother ever let you come here alone?”

“We lost our way. Is it far to Fleurville?”

“I should say it is. A good six miles to the village, and a half mile to the big house. But I’ll drive fast, for your mother must be scared by this time. It’s lucky for you that you struck the wood-road, though you didn’t know it. You might have wandered off into



Happy Surprises

the heart of the forest and never have been heard of again.”

In less than an hour they reached Fleurville, and drove to the house. Lisette, pale and frightened, opened the door.

“Have you found them?” she asked, supposing she was speaking to one of the men who had been sent out to search for the children.

“Yes, I have them. And I tell you they were mighty glad to get out of the woods.”

He lifted them from the cart, and Lisette clasped them in her arms.

“Quick! Quick!” she cried. “Run to the drawing-room. The ladies are wild. They have sent men out with lanterns. But wait a minute, my man. Madame will want to thank you.”

“Bah! There’s nothing to thank me for—I can’t wait for I must go six miles before I get home.”

“Then do please tell me where you live and what is your name.”

“Well—if you ever go to Aube ask anybody there for Hurel the butcher, and you’ll find me. Good night!”



Lost In a Tree

“Good night!” cried Lisette.

In the meantime the little girls had scamp-
ered into the drawing-room as fast as their
tired feet could carry them, to be received
with love that could not be told!





Chapter 7

THE HAPPY HURELS

Their Surprise!

It was nearly noon the next day, and Camilla and Madeleine, who were waiting for the lost children to wake, were growing impatient. Madame de Rosbourg came into the room. She was leading Marguerite, for she could not be without her little girl for even one minute.

"Where is Sophie? Is she sleeping yet?" asked Madame de Fleurville.



The Happy Hurels

"No. She will come as soon as she is dressed."

"O Marguerite!" exclaimed Camilla, "we have been waiting so long to hear what happened yesterday."

Marguerite was eager to tell. How frightened they had been when they knew they were lost! How hungry they had been, and thirsty, and, oh, so tired! Then how happy they had been when they found that brook, and afterward so frightened when they heard the rustling, and Marguerite had felt the hot breathing on the back of her neck! And then she had screamed, and Sophie had screamed too, and they had seen the animal run away into the woods.

"What was he like?" asked Madeleine.

"I don't know. I was so afraid—but I think he was brown. Sophie thinks so, too."

"Do hurry and tell us the rest," said Camilla.

"What man was it who brought you back in his cart?" asked Madeleine.

"He was a dear kind man, but now wait till I tell you about the wild animals! Well, we heard awful noises, just like a procession



Happy Surprises

of wild beasts making all sorts of queer sounds. We caught hold of branches and went straight up into the tree. We didn't climb, Mother, we ran on our hands and feet as high as we could. I don't know how we did it, but we never stopped till we got to the top.

"You can't think how good Sophie is! She was so sorry she had brought me there, that she would have carried me if she could. But she couldn't, so she went ahead and trampled down the rough places on the path, and broke through the tangles in the bushes, so that they shouldn't scratch me."

"Mother," interrupted Camilla, "you said yesterday that Sophie and Marguerite might never get home again. But it seems to me that they could easily have found the road back."

"You forget what we call the woods is only a strip of the great forest," answered Madame de Fleurville. "It was thinned out and the paths cut to make easy going between the villages. Our own park and grounds were a part of the forest two hundred years ago."

"But there are no wolves there now," interrupted Camilla again.



The Happy Hurels

"You are mistaken, there are wolves as well as other wild animals."

Marguerite shuddered.

"Just think, if there had been a wolf, we might have been eaten up this minute!" she said.

"I should say, judging from what you tell me, that the brown thing certainly was a wolf," answered Madame de Fleurville. "He was frightened by your screams. When wolves are not hungry they are cowards. At this season they have more than they can eat, for the forest is full of game. It was really the wild boar that was dangerous, for boars have tusks. They are not dangerous except when they have their little ones to protect. Then they are absolutely ferocious."

"Here is Sophie!" exclaimed Madame de Rosbourg. "Come and sit by me, Sophie. You certainly had an adventure yesterday that neither you nor Marguerite will ever forget, I am sure."

"No, indeed!" exclaimed Sophie. "I shall remember it all my life. As soon as I can, I mean to have a painter make a picture of us and the wolf and the boars. I shall have him



Happy Surprises

put a verse under it too, so that everybody shall know why it was made. It will be this:

“Marguerite and I
Ran safe and high,
When the dreadful wolf
And boars went by!”

“Will that be all right?”

“It tells the whole story,” said Madame de Rosbourg.

“It tells the whole story,” said Madame de Fleurville, and they both smiled.

“Lisette has told us that good Hurel brought you back,” said Madame de Rosbourg. “It is too late to go now to Aube, but in the morning we will thank him.”

“Must I go?” asked Sophie.

“Surely, it was you as well as Marguerite that he saved from death.”

“That’s true, and I know that I ought to go, but I hate to have him laugh at me. He acted as if we were babies, but of course I’ll go just the same.”

The next day they went to Aube—all of them. And when the two carriages drove into the village, people ran to their doors and



Happy Surprises

windows curious to see what ladies and children were stopping at the house of Hurel the butcher.

His wife and daughter could not believe that it was a visit for them. He himself had not given a second thought to the adventure in the forest; he could only suppose that new customers were come.

“What may I show you, ladies? I have superb mutton and the best of beef, and—”

“Thank you,” replied Madame de Rosbourg. “We are not come to buy, but to pay our debt.”

“Debt, Madame? I don’t think that you owe me anything. I don’t remember to have sold meat or game to you.”

“No, I do not owe you for meat or game, but for these children whom you found in the wood.”

Hurel laughed. “Oho! These are the children that I picked off a tree! You don’t want to range the forest again, do you, little ones?”

“Oh, no! We were cold and hungry and so frightened that if you had not saved us, we should have died—and that is why my Mother



The Happy Hurels

and Madame de Fleurville and all of us are come to thank you."

While she was speaking, Marguerite went to Hurel and stood on tip-toe to kiss him. The good man lifted her from the ground and gave her a hearty kiss on each cheek, saying:

"It would have been a pity to have any harm come to a dear little girl like you. But take seats, ladies! Daughter Victorine, bring some chairs!"

Victorine brought the chairs, and after a friendly chat, Madame de Rosbourg asked what time it was. Hurel looked at the cuckoo clock hanging on the wall.

"Our cuckoo is out of order. It doesn't keep good time, but it can't be far from four o'clock," he said.

"It is getting late," Madame de Rosbourg said, and as she rose to go, she laid a little leather case in Hurel's hand, adding, "I see you have no watch, so here is a remembrance from the children. I hope you will wear it always."

He opened the case, and when he saw a handsome watch and gold chain, he exclaimed:



Happy Surprises

“My dear lady! I could never carry a gold watch and chain like this! Look at it, Marie, Victorine! Did you ever see such a beauty?” And he dangled the watch in front of his wife and daughter.

“You must wear it for the children’s sake and mine too, for we can never forget what you did for us all,” said Madame de Rosbourg.

Then as she stepped into her carriage, she gave Hurel’s wife and daughter each a little box holding a pin and earrings, saying:

“I hope when you see what is in these, you will be pleased.”

It was evident that they did not wait long to discover what was in them.

As the carriages drove away, the ladies and children were delighted to see the whole Hurel family standing together on the little lawn, brimming over with smiles, and kissing their boxes to them instead of their hands, as they waved good-bye.



BOYS AND SUMMER-HOUSES

Several Surprises!

"I have a delightful surprise for you," said Madame de Fleurville, as she bade them good-night.

"Your Uncle and Aunt de Ruges, and your Uncle and Aunt de Traypi are coming the day after tomorrow, Thursday. All three boys are coming too."

"What good times we shall have!" exclaimed Camilla, and the four children



Happy Surprises

agreed, "It will be hard to wait till Thursday!"

But Thursday morning came at last. The mothers were sitting quietly in the little sun-parlor, looking out on the driveway, when Marguerite appeared at the door.

"They are not in sight yet, are they?" she asked.

"No, not yet."

"Oh, goody! We were afraid that we hadn't time to put flowers in the rooms. But now it will be all right!" and away she ran.

"What flowers shall I pick, Camilla?"

"Dahlias and mignonette—one is beautiful and the other sweet."

"Sophie, will you get me four vases?"

Sophie brought the vases, which were soon filled with gorgeous dahlias and delicate mignonette. Two of them the children carried to the room of Leon and Jean de Ruges, and two they placed on the table of little Jacques de Traypi.

"Now we have everything done! Jacques will be enchanted with his room. It is charming!" said Camilla. "And the picture-books will please him too."



Boys and Summer-Houses

At that minute Marguerite's voice was heard:

"Here they are! Here they are!"

Two carriages passed through the gates and came up the driveway. They stopped before the broad steps of the house. Then there was excitement! A welcome affectionate and so joyous! When quiet was restored, the children surprised each other.

"How tall you have grown, Leon!"

"And how pretty you are, Camilla!"

"Jean, you are like a young man!"

"If you say that I am a real young man, Madeleine, I will say that you are grown to be a real young lady. And that is true!"

"O Jacques, I am so glad to see you!"

"I'm glad to see you too, Marguerite. We'll have a lot of frog-hunts, shan't we?"

"What fun we shall have!" they all cried.

Sophie stood apart. She had been met in the friendliest fashion, but yet she felt alone. Jean was the first to notice that she was sad, and he drew himself up very straight as he said softly:

"I remember how good you were to me when I was here before. I was a little boy



Happy Surprises

then, but now I am taller than you are, and it's my turn to look after you."

"You are good, Jean. You make me forget that I have no family."

"O Sophie!" exclaimed Camilla. "You know that we are your sisters and Mother is your mother, and we all love you dearly. Why do you make us feel badly by saying such things? It seems as though you did not love us."

"Forgive me, Camilla. I'm sorry I said that, for I have truly found a mother and sisters."

"And brothers, too!" cried the three boys together.

Sophie forgot to be sad. She laughed.

"Thank you, dear brothers, I am proud of my family."

"Children! Children! Come to luncheon! Come quickly!" called Madame de Fleurville.

They did not need that invitation twice. Sitting around the table enjoying the cakes and fruit, they laid plans for the next day. Leon would have a fishing party, Jean wanted to read aloud.

"I shall spend the whole day chasing but-



Boys and Summer-Houses

terflies with Marguerite," said Jacques. "We'll get up at six, for that's the best time to catch them. And then we'll spread their wings and pin them to corks."

"Pin them to corks!" echoed Marguerite in a horrified voice. "Never in this world will I do that! Nor kill them neither! We'll go fishing with Leon."

Jacques had a sweet nature, and he promised to do just what pleased the others. After luncheon they took a walk. They admired Camilla's and Madeleine's garden, so bright with flowers and so beautifully kept.

"You ought to have a summer-house," said Jean. "It would protect you from the sun and the rain too."

"That's true," answered Camilla, "but we could never make it, we aren't strong enough."

"Jean and I will build it for you while we are here," said Leon grandly.

"And Marguerite and I will make one for ourselves," added Jacques.

Leon laughed.



Happy Surprises

“Ha! Ha! Fine workmen you two will be! You don’t know even how to begin.”

“Oh, we’ll know and we’ll do it!”

“We’ll help you,” said Madeleine, “and I am sure that Leon and Jean will help too.”

“But, Jacques, how can you make a house big enough to hold two people?” asked Sophie.

“You’ll see. I have a plan.” And Jacques added something in a low voice to Marguerite.

She laughed and whispered:

“That’s splendid. But don’t tell till it is done.”

Then all went to the vegetable garden and inspected the fruit trees. Next they visited the cows, the sheep and the lambs, the rabbits, the chickens.

Such happy boys! They were like prisoners set free. They ran races, they leaped over ditches, they swung from the trees, they gathered wild flowers. Jacques gave his to Marguerite. Jean divided his carefully chosen ones between Madeleine and Sophie. And Leon picked his for Camilla.

When dinner was served, they all ate with an appetite that amazed everybody.



Boys and Summer-Houses



"GIVE US SOME BROWN BREAD AND MILK!" THEY CRIED

That evening Jacques was seen talking with his father and Marguerite. Their voices were so low that no one overheard what they were saying. Once Jacques clapped his hands and hugged his father, but they would not tell why.

In the morning when Jean and Leon went as they always did, to wake Jacques, there was no Jacques.

"What time do you suppose he got up?" exclaimed Jean.

"At daylight, you may be sure. This is



Happy Surprises

only our second day, and I guess he was too excited to sleep. Let's get a drink of warm milk and some brown bread. It's milking time. Don't you remember how Mother Diart was always ready to give us a treat? Come on!"

They arrived just as the milking was finished. Mother Diart welcomed them heartily, and when Leon asked for warm milk and brown bread, she bustled away to get it.

"I'll have it in a jiffy," she said, and back she came with bowls and a huge loaf of brown bread, and a sharp knife. She filled both bowls from the pail of warm milk, and cut slice after slice of bread.

"I can't eat any more," declared Leon at last. "And you ought to stop, too, Jean, for we have that summer-house to build before Jacques begins his."

"I don't know if we can," said Jean doubtfully. "Jacques is strong, little as he is, and is clever too. When he starts to do a thing, he does it."

"But do you suppose he can build a house with only girls to help him?"

"I don't know."



Boys and Summer-Houses

“Well, I know that a little boy like Jacques can’t be much of a builder,” said Leon loftily. “But let’s find the girls. It’s nearly eight o’clock.”

Camilla and Madeleine were waiting for them. They and the boys were just going to begin work, when they heard bang—bang—bang, as if some one was nailing boards.

“Who is pounding in our garden?” exclaimed Camilla.

“It must be some one in the woods,” replied Leon.

“No, it seems to come from the garden,” and as Camilla spoke, Marguerite came running to meet them.

“Hello!” said she. “Come, and see what we are doing.”

She led them a short way into the woods. There was little Jacques armed with a hammer and nailing boards to the stakes that made the four corners of his house.

But what was most surprising, was that Jacques had done so much work so well. The way those stakes were sunken! The way in which the windows and doors were marked out! The big boys stood speechless, while



Happy Surprises

Jacques threw down his hammer and leaned against a tree to laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Leon.

"You are all so surprised."

"How did you ever carry those heavy boards?" asked Jean.

"Sophie and Marguerite helped me."

Leon and Jean shook their heads and walked slowly around. They tested the stakes. They counted the number of boards, while Camilla and Madeleine praised Jacques' work.

"What time was it when you got up?" asked Jean.

"Five o'clock, and by six we were here, tools and all. Here they are—try them."

"No, we'll learn from watching such a clever carpenter as you."

Jacques glanced knowingly at Sophie and Marguerite.

"We are tired now," said they. "We'll take our nets and chase butterflies."

And Jacques and the two girls ran laughingly away.



"LOOK AT THE SUMMER HOUSE," THEY CRIED



Happy Surprises

“They don’t act much like tired people,” said Leon as he watched them go.

Suddenly he had something else to think of, for Camilla and Madeleine came rushing towards him, crying out:

“People are in the bushes! We heard them!”

Leon drew back, while Jean seized Jacques’ hammer and sprang in front of the girls. But there was no sound. They listened. All was quiet.

“Throw down your hammer, Jean,” said Leon scornfully. “It’s nothing at all.”

“Thank you, Jean,” said Camilla. “We really thought we heard a noise. But now—let’s see about our summer-house—we want to put it opposite Jacques’. Of course we must have stakes and boards, but we can find all we need in Nicaise’s carpenter shop. He kindly lets us have whatever we want. I’ll show you.”

They found the gardener’s shed. It was stocked with wood of every sort for every use.

“This is where Nicaise mends his things, and here’s his cart. We’ll take that too. It’s just what we want.”





Boys and Summer-Houses

So they piled it up with boards. Leon and Jean harnessed themselves to the cart with ropes, while Camilla and Madeleine stood one on either side to keep the load from sliding. They walked down the path and passed triumphantly by the butterfly hunters, who ranged themselves in a line like soldiers and presented arms with their nets.

Suddenly breakfast time came, and there was a stampede. With Lisette's help there was a washing of hands, a flourish of brushes and combs, and glances in the mirror. Then seven well-behaved hungry young people seated themselves at the table.

"Well, and how are the summer-houses getting on?" asked Colonel de Traypi. "You big boys must have yours nearly finished by this time."

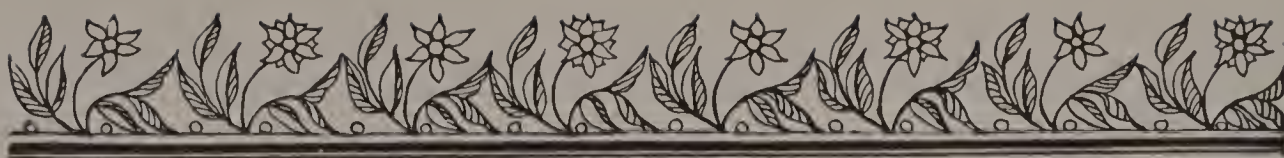
"Not yet, Uncle," answered Leon. "We have just begun to drive in the stakes."

"And how much has my little Jacques done?"

"Oh, a bit!"

Marguerite, always ready to take Jacques' part, exclaimed:

"Just you tell Uncle that he has done more



Happy Surprises

than you all, for he has fastened his boards to the stakes."

Colonel de Traypi laughed.

"Jacques is a better workman than you thought, eh, Leon?"

"Leon," said Camilla, "you must know more than any of us. Won't you tell us what to do for our house?"

This little compliment soothed Leon, and when they went back to work, he gave each a task, and all worked industriously for two hours. But after his house was nearly done, the stakes were loose in the ground, the boards would not hold together, the nails were bent or were driven in crooked.

"Let's rest till tomorrow," said the builders. "We are all so tired."

But Jacques, instead of going to the garden with the others, went to speak to his father, who listened intently, and then said:

"You are a good little fellow, my Jacquot, and I'll do what you asked last night. I'll finish their house for them."

And Jacques, quite satisfied, ran off to play with his cousins.

They had agreed that tired or not tired



Boys and Summer-Houses

they would finish the summer-houses the next day. So in the early morning the band, full of good resolutions, filed out again to their place of work.

When they arrived, they stopped.

Nobody spoke.

There before them stood the two summer-houses—finished! The windows lacked only panes of glass. How could such a thing have happened? It was a miracle!

“Let me explain,” said Colonel de Traypi stepping out from among the trees. “Jacques asked me to help you because I had helped him. I called Nicaise and we two did the job. Twice when he was gone to his shop for tools, I was nearly caught, once by Jean with his hammer, and once by Leon. I know just how a burglar feels when the policeman is after him.” Colonel de Traypi laughed.

“I will say, Uncle,” said Jean, “that you have the legs of an athlete! However you managed to get out and in through that tangle of bushes, I don’t know.”

Colonel de Traypi laughed again.

“I won a medal for being the fastest runner in my class at college, and maybe I haven’t



Happy Surprises

lost that knack. Now I hope you will enjoy our work.”

“We can never thank you enough for it. You are the dearest uncle in the world,” the children cried.

And they meant what they said.

Afterwards when Leon was alone with Jacques, he said:

“I’m sorry I was cross to you, for you are the best fellow that ever lived.”

And he meant what he said!

Before the end of the vacation, the summer-houses, covered with ivy and flowering vines, were beautiful to look at. And the cosy little rooms were charming. They were furnished with tables and chairs, odd and old, brought down from the attic. Old rugs, that had not lost their brightness, were thrown on the sanded floors.

There the boys and girls read, wrote letters to their friends, made clever toys, and were as happy when it rained as when the sun shone.



Chapter 9

THE MAN IN THE WOODS

Lucie's Big Surprise!

"I like the mill road better than any road or path near the forest," said Leon one day when they were all out doors enjoying the fresh air and sunshine.

"I don't like any of them! I never shall," declared Sophie. "I can't forget what happened when we went to help Mother Luitain."

"Don't be foolish. There never was anything that night to frighten sensible people," answered Leon, who was planning a joke.



Happy Surprises

And he thought delightedly, "Father and Uncle George are here now, but they'll soon be going back to the house. Then I'll give the girls a good scare!"

He had seen a narrow path leading off the road. It was just the place! So he slipped away quietly. For a while no one missed him. Then at last Marguerite asked:

"Where is Leon?"

She was answered by a scream of real terror from the bushes. And Leon, waving both arms frantically, rushed from the woods into the road, shouting:

"Murder! Murder!"

A poorly dressed man followed him, swinging a stick. When the man saw Major de Ruges and Colonel de Traypi, he came towards them taking off his cap.

"What is the matter?" asked Major de Ruges. "Who are you, man, and what has happened to my son?"

"I don't know why the boy is so frightened, sir. I was tired and was taking a nap on the ground. When I woke up, I saw him crouching under a bush. But he didn't see a big snake close to him, coiled ready to strike. I



The Man in the Woods

tell you, I didn't wait to count two! I grabbed him and set him outside. He ran as if the bugaboo was after him, and yelled as though he had him."

Major de Ruges could understand why Leon was startled by such an unexpected attack. But he wanted to talk with him and make him ashamed of acting like a scared baby.

In the meantime the children gathered around the stranger. Sophie was staring at him.

"I have seen him before," she thought. "But where? And I have heard his voice."

The man was looking at the children. Suddenly he saw Sophie, and staggered as though he were falling. Then he almost whispered:

"Miss—Miss—you are never Sophie de Rean?—No!—You can't be!"

"Yes, I am Sophie—and I seem to know you." She hesitated as she spoke and drew her hand slowly across her forehead. "But it is so long—so long—I wonder—" her face brightened. "Oh yes! Now I remember! Aren't you Leconte the Norman sailor?"



Happy Surprises

“Yes indeed, Miss, that’s myself! But how did you ever get out of the wreck, Miss Sophie?”

There were tears in Sophie’s voice and in her eyes, as she answered:

“They say my father saved me. I don’t know how, and I don’t know what became of Paul. He was with Commander de Rosbourg.”

“Commander de Rosbourg!” exclaimed Major de Ruges.

The man turned to Major de Ruges.

“Yes, sir, he was my Commander. And to think, sir, that I was always sure dear little Miss Sophie was at the bottom of the ocean! And here she is safe and well in my own Normandy.”

“But where is Paul now? Was he lost with the ship?” interrupted Sophie.

“No, he was not. Commander de Rosbourg stayed with the ship till there were only three of us left. Then the Commander, Paul and I jumped into an empty boat that was floating on the waves, and we got to the shore. The Commander carried the boy in his arms. There were savages on shore—two bands of



The Man in the Woods



SOPHIE RECOGNIZES THE NORMAN

them. They divided us—one tribe took the Commander and Paul—the other took me.

“Finally after all these years, I escaped. Now I am looking everywhere for my wife and child, but I can’t find a trace of them.”

“Poor Paul!” said Sophie, wiping her eyes.

While the fathers were earnestly questioning the sailor, the children clustered round Sophie.

“Have you really been in a shipwreck with my own father?” asked Marguerite eagerly.



Happy Surprises

“And when everybody else was lost, how were you saved?” asked Madeleine.

“Who was the Paul you were talking about?” inquired Jacques.

“Why didn’t you ever tell us about it?” asked Camilla.

“Why does that man call you Sophie de Rean?” asked Leon.

“Because that was the name I was born with,” answered Sophie.

“How could you change it for another?” asked Marguerite.

“I don’t know. But I think Mr. Fichini left my father his name and some land in America.”

“Now I remember,” exclaimed Camilla. “When we were little we used to go to your house. Your father and mother were there, your mother was Madame de Rean. And there were an Uncle and Aunt d’ Aubert, and Paul d’ Aubert was your boy cousin.”

Sophie nodded.

“Yes, that was true, and when I had been years away, I came back with my stepmother. I never spoke of those things because I had been forbidden to mention them. Then I



The Man in the Woods

forgot them myself. I was very little, you know. But seeing the Norman made me remember. Now I think that my whole life will come back to me, and perhaps Paul will come back!”

“That’s impossible!” exclaimed Leon. “He has been gone too long.”

“Not at all,” replied Jean. “The Norman came back after these many years, and Paul was with Commander de Rosbourg.”

“Then of course the savages have eaten both of them,” snapped Leon.

Sophie began to cry. Jacques threw his arms around her, his black eyes flashed angrily. And Jean said:

“Leon, why do you try to torment poor Sophie?”

“I suppose I must never speak,” muttered Leon.

“Certainly not, when you have nothing but disagreeable things to say.”

The little girls tried their best to persuade Sophie that Paul was alive and would soon come home. They felt so sure that both he and the Commander had escaped. Leon was sorry for what he had said, and thought:



Happy Surprises

“As soon as I see Sophie alone, I’ll tell her so. Only I won’t let anybody else know it.”

Marguerite, who had been watching the sailor, suddenly went over to where he was standing, for she thought to herself, “He will never stop talking and I can’t wait any longer!”

“Was the child you are looking for,” she asked excitedly, “your boy or your girl?”

“She is my girl. She is about fourteen years old and her name is Lucie. Maybe you know her?” said the man eagerly.

“Yes, I know her, for she looks just like you turned into a girl. She lives in the White House with her mother.”

But she could not say any more, for the man seemed suddenly to grow wild. He ran down the road calling:

“Françoise! Lucie!”

Then realizing that he did not know the way, he came running back and seized Marguerite’s hand.

“Take me to them. Where do they live?”

It was Colonel de Traypi who answered kindly:



The Man in the Woods

"That will not do, for if you should go there suddenly, it might kill your wife. She has been very sick, and must be told gently."

"That's true, sir. I feel like a fish out of water, and could swim a hundred leagues."

"Come, we'll go now."

They all went together. When they came in sight of the White House, the children waited while their fathers went to prepare Françoise. Leconte walked excitedly up and down.

Just then a young girl came briskly along with a basket on her arm. She had been to the village for groceries.

"Lucie!" cried Marguerite.

"Lucie!" echoed Leconte.

Lucie dropped her basket. She grew red, then pale.

"It can't—it can't be Father! O my dear, dear Father!" and she threw herself into his arms.

"I would know you among ten thousand! But how did you know me?" he asked while the tears trickled down his cheeks.

"Because you are not much changed. But



Happy Surprises

I must call Mother," and Lucie would have run into the White House, but her father held her back.

"No, no, not yet! She must be told gently. The gentlemen are gone to prepare her."

Lucie promised to be calm, and ran into the house, glowing with happiness.

"Mother! Dear Mother! I am so glad! I can't tell you!"

Her mother looked at her anxiously.

"Why are you glad? What has happened? These gentlemen have just spoken of some one who has come home from the sea. You can't have news of your father?"

Lucie did not reply. She laughed and she cried.

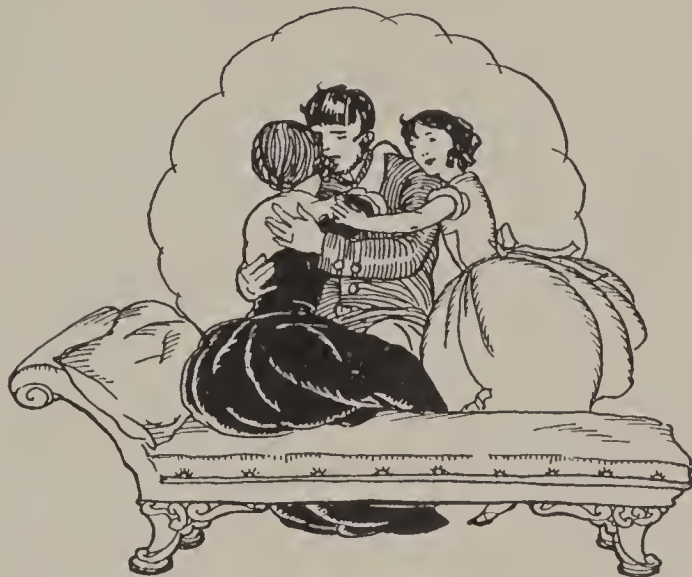
"Answer me, Lucie! Have you heard from your father?"

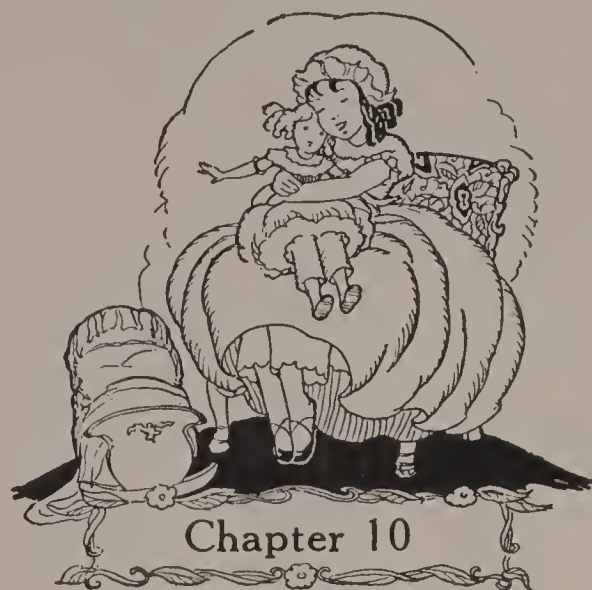
"Here he is," came a voice from the door, and Leconte, forgetting that he meant to be prudent, rushed into the room and clasped Françoise in his arms. And Françoise, instead of fainting, cried from pure happiness, while Lucie threw her arms around them both.



The Man in the Woods

And then in his own home and in his native
land, the Norman sailor said from a full heart:
“I have found all that I lost!”





THE WAX DOLL

The Sun's Queer Surprise!

There was great excitement at Fleurville. Every one rejoiced. Commander de Rosbourg and Paul might still be living!

Colonel de Traypi was a quiet man, who always thought twice before he acted once.

So when he said, "I am going to Paris to see the Secretary of the Navy," Madame de Rosbourg and Madame de Fleurville were delighted. They were full of hope.

"I shall tell of Leconte's return and what he has said to us about Commander de Ros-



The Wax Doll

bourg and Paul. Ships often stop at those islands. Sailors have adventures and are rescued. Maybe I shall bring home some good news. Who knows?"

While he was gone, and while the boys were enjoying their favorite sport, shooting at a mark, Madame de Rosbourg held what she called her "Class." She had lived in Italy, and had learned there to embroider in such wonderful stitchery and colors that her work was almost like painting.

"Come, my Class," she called one morning. "Camilla, Madeleine, Sophie, and my little Marguerite! Come all and bring your embroidery frames. I have gathered flowers for you to copy. We will try these lilies of France."

They were busy choosing silks in colors and shades that would harmonize with the royal gold of the lilies, and did not notice that Madame de Fleurville had come quietly into the room, and was sitting in the big red chair by the window. In her lap lay an open portfolio full of closely written papers.

There was a note of sadness in her voice,



Happy Surprises

in spite of the smile on her lips. Her eyes rested on Sophie.

“Madame de Rosbourg is willing for me to read aloud, while you work,” she said. “This portfolio was given me by Sophie’s own mother. Before she sailed for America, she laid it in my hand saying, ‘I have always kept a journal of Sophie’s little doings, so that she may know herself better when she grows up. I have written them like stories. Will you take care of them, my friend?’

“And all these years I have saved the stories,” added Madame de Fleurville. “Shall I read some of them, Sophie? It will be like looking at a landscape through a field-glass.”

Sophie was so delighted that her voice trembled, and she cried out:

“O yes! Indeed do!”

Madame de Fleurville looked lovingly at her.

“And you will know your own dear little mother better,” she said.

“And we shall know Sophie better, too!” cried Camilla.

Here then is the first story that Madame de Fleurville read, as she sat in the big red arm-



The Wax Doll

chair, that had been brought from Sophie's old home and which appears in one of these very stories.

So the little girls gathered around her while they embroidered, and listened to the story of:

THE WAX DOLL

"Marie! Marie!" cried Sophie, rushing like a small whirlwind into the room where the maid sat sewing. "Come and open the box that Father has sent from Paris. I know it is a doll, for he promised me one."

"Where is the box?" asked Marie.

"In the other room. Do come quickly."

Marie laid down her work and followed Sophie. The box was on a chair. When it was opened they spied the blond and curly head of a wax doll. Although it was wrapped in many papers, Sophie tried to seize it.

"Take care!" cautioned Marie. "You'll break it. Don't you see it is fastened to the box?"

"Break the cord! Tear it off!" And Sophie too excited to stand still danced around the chair.



Happy Surprises

But Marie very quietly taking her scissors, cut the string and unfolding the wrappings, laid in Sophie's arms the prettiest doll ever seen.

Its eyes were blue and bright. In each rosy cheek was a dimple, and two little teeth peeped through the red lips. Its arms were plump like a real baby's arms, and its dress was trimmed with lace and ribbons. It wore little socks and slippers.

Sophie clasped it to her heart and ran up and down the room fairly shouting with joy. Her cousin Paul, who was older than she, heard the noise and came running in to see what it meant.

"Look at the beautiful doll Father sent me!"

Paul held out his hands.

"Let me take it."

Sophie hugged it tighter.

"No, you would break it," she said.

"I promise you I'll be very careful, and I'll give it back directly. I want only to look at it."

Sophie gave him the doll.

"Don't let it fall!"



The Wax Doll

Paul turned it around and around, looking at it from every side, then gave it back shaking his head.

“What makes you shake your head?”

“Because it isn’t very strong. I am sure you will break it.”

“Oh, don’t be afraid! I shall take such good care of it that I shall never break it. I am going to beg Mother to let me ask Camilla and Madeleine to come and see it.”

Paul shook his head again.

“Then it will surely be broken.”

“No indeed! They wouldn’t hurt my child for anything. They will love it as much as I do.”

The next morning Sophie’s first thought was of her doll, and then that Camilla and Madeleine were coming.

“How glad they will be to see her,” she said to herself, as she tied the bright blue ribbon around the golden hair. “But I am afraid she is cold. I will leave her in the sunshine, and they will know that I take care of her and keep her warm.”

Sophie carried her doll to the parlor window where the sun was hottest.



Happy Surprises

“What are you doing, Sophie?” asked her mother.

“I’m warming my doll. She is very cold.”

“Be careful or she will melt.”

“O no! She can’t melt. She is as hard as wood.”

“That may be, but heat will soften wax. Remember, I warn you.”

But Sophie did not remember. She forgot everything except that she heard a carriage coming.

“There they are!” she cried, and flew to meet Camilla and Madeleine.

Paul was leading them into the house.

While they were speaking to Sophie’s mother, Sophie ran into the parlor to get her child. Camilla and Madeleine hurried after her, anxious for a sight of the wonder. There they found Sophie holding it up and staring at it. She could only stare. Madeleine stared too, but she spoke.

“Your doll is blind. She has no eyes.”

“What a pity!” said Camilla, taking the doll in her arms. “How pretty she is, but where are her eyes?”



The Wax Doll

Sophie still said nothing. She looked at her child and sobbed.

“What is the matter?” asked her mother who had followed her. “Oh, I see! You have left your doll in the hot sunshine. She is not badly hurt. Happily her face and hands have not had time to melt, so do not cry. I am a clever doll-doctor, and perhaps I can give back her eyes. Who knows?”

“Oh, no, Mother, you can’t! They are not there any more.”

Her mother smiled as she shook the doll gently, and something rattled inside the head.

“It is the eyes that make that sound. The wax around them is melted, and they have fallen in, but I will try to recover them. Now children, get your baby ready while I bring my instruments,” she said gaily.

Very quickly Camilla and Madeleine prepared the doll for the operation. Sophie had stopped crying and was anxiously watching to see what would happen. Her mother snipped the stitches that held the doll’s head to its body. The eyes fell out in her lap, and with a pair of pincers she carefully picked them up and put them back into their sockets.



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Then she poured melted wax around them, and when that was sufficiently cooled, she sewed the head and body together.

The children had not stirred, so interested were they. Sophie was delighted to see her child well and as pretty as ever. She threw her arms round her mother's neck.

"Thank you! Thank you, my own Mamma! I shall always remember what you say."

Certainly Sophie was never so happy.

Then they put the doll on a little cushion, and danced around it singing joyfully:

"Vive! Vive! Mother!
Mother dear, Mother sweet!
Soon we'll bring our flowers,
And lay them at her feet!
Vive! Vive! Mother!"

After this adventure the wax doll was Sophie's comfort. She was called Dear Child.

"I named her that," said Sophie, "because it is what Mother calls me; and when I speak to her I feel as though I were her mother."

When Sophie was lonely, she talked to her doll.



The Wax Doll

“Dear Child,” she said one morning, “do you know that you have never been washed? When I went with Marie to pay Lambert’s wife for her sewing, she was washing her baby Marie. She had soap and water and a big brush and a towel. Baby Marie looked like a red radish, but big Marie said she would look like a red rose, and would be sorry that she had kicked and screamed so. Now, Dear Child, I am going to wash you this minute and make you prettier than ever.”

Then Sophie brought the soap and water and the big brush and towel and fell to work. Especially she used the big brush—vigorously—for Sophie never did do anything by halves. But when she looked at her Dear Child’s face, every bit of color was gone—cheeks and lips were white.

“How pale she is! I have made her sick!”

And Sophie ran to Marie, who asked:

“What on earth have you been doing to her?”

“I washed her as Mother Lambert washed baby Marie, only more. I did the best I could. Just see how pale she is.”

Marie looked very sober.



Happy Surprises

“You must wait till her red cheeks come back. That is the best you can do now.”

Sophie shed many tears, but Dear Child remained always pale.

“Dear Child,” she said one day, “I must curl your hair again. You have leaned against me so much that it is very rough. It makes you look as though you had no mother to care for you.”

Then she twisted the tiny ringlets over ends of paper. Taking the hot iron that Marie used for ruffles, she pressed it carefully on and over her Dear Child’s head.

“There! That will make your curly-wig stay.”

Suddenly she sniffed.

“It smells scorchy,” she said, and she quickly lifted the iron.

But the paper came with it, and the hair came, also. The iron had been too hot.

Sophie cried, but Dear Child remained always bald.

Not long afterwards, Sophie found a foot-bath so agreeable that she decided to give one to Dear Child. Plunging the doll’s feet into boiling water, she kept them there for what



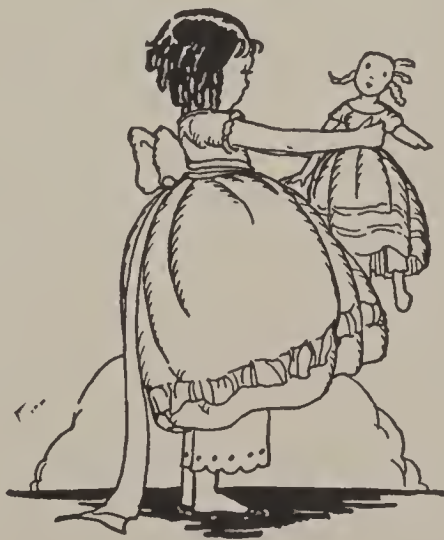
The Wax Doll

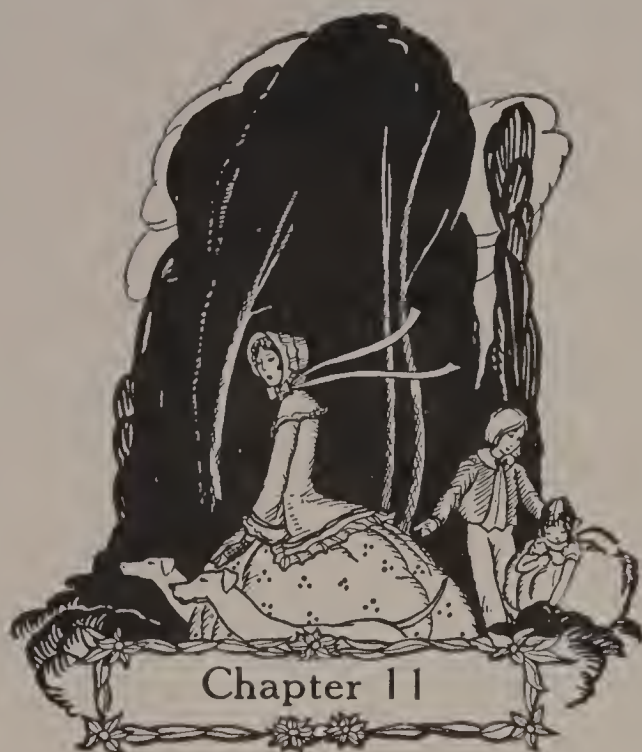
she thought was a proper number of minutes. When she took them out, the feet were melted into little balls of wax.

Sophie cried, but Dear Child remained always a cripple.

After these misfortunes, Dear Child was not pretty any more. Paul called her Scarecrow, and Madeleine and Camilla laughed at her. But Sophie said:

“My poor Dear Child! I shall love you more than ever, because you need it.”





STRAWBERRIES RIPE

A Brave Surprise!

Here Madame de Fleurville looked up from her reading as she finished the story of the Wax Doll, but before she could speak, Marguerite exclaimed:

“O Sophie! I wish I had been there with you! What good times Dear Child could have had playing with my Beauty.”

But Sophie had stopped working, and there were tears in her eyes.



Strawberries Ripe

“Was I always naughty? Did I give my mother so much trouble?” she asked.

“Not naughty—only thoughtless,” Madame de Fleurville answered. “But now see what happened to you in the woods, so long ago!”

And she read aloud the story of:

THE WOLVES

Sophie’s father owned a large farm. Every week butter and eggs and cheese and honey were sent from the farm to her father’s Hall. And every Wednesday morning Sophie’s mother went to see the farmer.

She always walked for she loved the wooded road that skirted the forest—a long stretch of forest, from which sometimes wolves were seen to come and run across the road to the hills beyond. Because of this Sophie’s mother preferred to take her dogs with her, great hunting dogs that always accompanied her on her walks.

“There is more protection in them than in men and guns,” she would say, patting the



Happy Surprises

dogs' heads, while they looking up at her seemed to answer:

"You are right. We will guard you always."

Sophie loved the farm. Whenever she was allowed to go there, she followed her mother through the dairy, and out where the cows and horses were kept. But the pigs and chickens and ducks were the most delightful. And the dear old farmer's wife, in her high cap and wooden shoes that went click-click, always had milk and cookies waiting for Sophie.

As to the wolves, Sophie never in her life had seen one.

"They are like ogres that people tell about just to scare children. I don't believe there are any," she said.

"I do," declared Paul. "Lambert says that when his father was a boy, he shot one. He himself has seen their eyes shining through the bushes like live coals, they are so bright."

"I don't care, I don't believe wolf stories," said Sophie.

This Wednesday morning she was hoping that her mother would say:



Strawberries Ripe

“Come Sophie, it is time for the strawberries to be ripe, and the bluebells are in blossom. You may come with me to the farm.”

But her mother did not say it. She remarked only:

“It is a beautiful day.”

Sophie saw that was the chance for her to speak.

“O yes, Mother! It is such a beautiful day that Lambert is going to turn the colts into the pasture—he said so, and that perhaps Paul and I might go to see them.”

Her mother hesitated.

“Do you promise that if I take you with me, you will not loiter behind? You know I walk fast, and you must keep up with me.”

Sophie clapped her hands.

“Yes indeed! We will run all the way. Come Paul! We are going to the farm with Mother.”

For a time Sophie was happy chasing butterflies, snatching at the flowers, and laughing and chattering with Paul. When her mother, a few steps ahead, would call, “Come, children, come!” they would answer merrily:



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“Here we are!”

But by and by Sophie began to lag behind. Then she stopped to pick the strawberries that grew on the side of the road.

“Try them, Paul! They are delicious and so sweet.”

“No, don’t stop. Aunt Cecile is at the turn of the road, and the dogs are out of sight already,” and Paul ran on.

“Sophie, do come!” he cried.

And her mother’s voice called:

“Come, children, come!”

Paul stopped, not knowing what to do. Suddenly Sophie stood up, brushed the strawberry stems off her dress, and ran towards him.

“She’s coming,” he thought and hurried on.

But Sophie did not come.

Something in the woods attracted her attention. It proved to be farther away than she thought, and she lost sight of the road. It was a place where the sunlight slanting through the trees made a fairy dell, and there were strawberries and flowers such as she had not dreamed of. Then quite forgetting what her



SOPHIE STOPPED TO PICK SOME STRAWBERRIES



Happy Surprises

mother had said and her own promise, she thought:

“If Paul could only see these! But I’ll make him a basket out of leaves, and fill it with berries on purpose for him.”

Paul was just then saying to her mother:

“Sophie is right behind us. I saw her running to catch up with us.”

They walked on, while Sophie’s mother told how, in the time of Paul’s grandfather, there were so many wolves in the forest that the farmers were obliged to keep shepherds to guard their flocks.

“You may be sure that nobody ventured far into the forest in those days,” she added. “But where is Sophie?”

“Sophie! Sophie!” they called, but only the echo answered.

“There may still be wolves, who knows? One cannot be sure even now,” said her mother.

They turned back hastily, Paul leading the way, the two great dogs trotting close beside him. At the turn of the road where he had last seen Sophie, the dogs became uneasy. They began to bark, and suddenly breaking



Strawberries Ripe

away, plunged into the forest. Paul followed.

It was the barking of the dogs that startled Sophie, who was sitting on the ground with her lap full of leaves for Paul's basket. She looked up and saw two great glittering eyes staring at her through the bushes. They were not the eyes of a dog!

She sprang to her feet as she screamed:

"O Mother! Mother!" and she saw her mother and Paul running towards her.

They had followed the dogs into the forest, and just as Sophie was going to throw herself into her mother's arms, a grey wolf thrust his head out from among the trees. He stopped at the sight of the dogs, but only for a moment. Then with his great jaws wide open and his eyes flaming, he sprang towards Sophie and would have seized her, but the dogs rushed at him.

He felt himself bitten. He turned upon them.

Meanwhile two other wolves, that had crept stealthily from behind the trees, came to the aid of their brother.

There was a ferocious fight.



Happy Surprises

Sophie's mother stood watching, too terrified to move. Paul grasped a broken branch of a tree and sprang between her and the wolves, while Sophie, not daring to look, clung trembling to her mother.

At last all three wolves disappeared, bleeding and beaten, into the forest. They were no match for the brave dogs, who with blood streaming down their sides, licked Sophie's hands. They knew that they had saved her, and were showing her how glad they felt. Sophie's mother cried as she caressed first one and then the other of the noble creatures, while Paul, kneeling beside them, praised and patted them.

"See how they are bleeding!" exclaimed Sophie's mother. "The wounds are not deep, but they need washing. I know where there is a little brook. We will go there."

The brook was really close by, but it seemed very far for Sophie's mother could hardly walk, and Paul was almost as pale and trembling as Sophie. But they were more than repaid when they saw the happiness of the dogs, as they threw themselves into the water. They splashed and rolled over and over, and



Strawberries Ripe

came out acting as though they would enjoy meeting another wolf.

On the way home, Sophie's mother said:

"Sophie, don't you think I was right, when I forbade you to loiter along the road?"

"Yes, Mother. I know you were right, and I am sorry that I disobeyed you."

When Lambert saw them walking slowly towards the Hall, he hurried to meet them.

"O Madame! what has happened?" he cried, shocked by their pale faces.

And when her mother described their terrible adventure in the forest, Sophie could not say a word. She knew that it had happened through her disobedience. No one blamed her. They thought she had been punished enough. The dogs, even, licked her hands as if they forgave her. But still she was sad.

The next day Paul came dashing into the playroom. He was dressed in a soldier's uniform—an officer's uniform.

"See, Sophie, what Aunt Cecile has given me! And she says I must wear it to dinner, when both our fathers will be there."

That night Paul could scarcely sleep, he was so happy. For at dinner, Sophie's mother

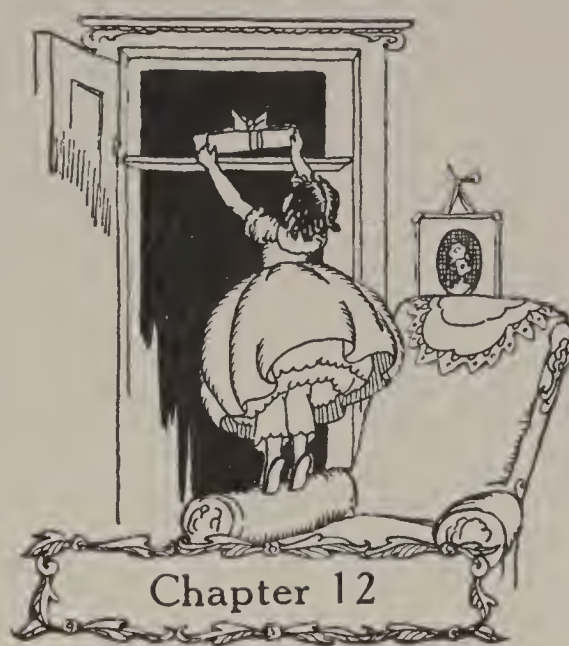


Happy Surprises

had pinned a gold medal to his breast, and said:

“This is for a good soldier, who never disobeys orders, and is never afraid. And this good soldier is our Paul!”





CANDIED FRUITS

A Sweet Surprise!

Madame de Fleurville was re-arranging the last pages of the Wolf Story, when Marguerite exclaimed:

“I don’t see why people are afraid of wolves. They are just like real mothers.”

Madame de Rosbourg dropped her needle, and the eyes of the whole Class were turned towards Marguerite.

“What do you mean, Marguerite?”

“I’ll tell you, Mother. Leon was reading



Happy Surprises

about a lovely wolf mother who found two baby boys—twins they were—and she gave them more than half her own dinner, just because they were boys. But she didn't teach them good manners, so they tried to build a city, and one killed the other as fast as he could. Why can't we have a pet wolf, Mother? Leon would trap one for us."

A cry of horror went up from the Class.

"I do not believe we want even a tame wolf," said Madame de Rosbourg laughing. "They don't make good friends, Marguerite."

And Madame de Fleurville added:

Now we will read the last story. It is the sweetest of all! It is called:

CANDIED FRUITS

One morning Sophie and Paul were passing through the hall.

"There's a man standing in the vestibule. I wonder who he is," said Sophie.

"He looks like an expressman. He has a package under his arm," answered Paul.

Then going towards the man he asked politely:



Candied Fruits

"Are you waiting for some one?"

"I am waiting for Madame de Rean. I have a parcel for her."

"Who sent it?" It was Sophie who asked.

"I don't know, Miss. It is from Paris."

"What is in it?"

"I don't know that either. I think it is some sort of candies. At least that was on the bill."

Sophie's eyes sparkled.

"Come quick, Paul, and tell Mother!"

Sophie's mother came, and, paying the man, took her package and left the room. Sophie and Paul followed closely. Great was their disappointment when they saw her lay it on a table and quietly return to the desk where she had been writing.

They looked at each other for a minute, then Sophie said coaxingly:

"Don't you want to open the box, Mother?"

"No, dear. If I had wished to, I should have asked you to do it."

Vexed and ashamed Sophie went slowly to the playroom. Paul followed.

"Let's have a game of jacks," he said.

Sophie did not answer.

"What's the matter with you?"



Happy Surprises

Sophie was silent. She looked very cross.

Suddenly Paul, who was balancing himself on a chair, rolled off. Sophie sprang up to help him.

“O poor Paul! Have you hurt yourself?”

“No, just the opposite. I made myself comfortable. I rolled over just to end our trouble.”

“O Paul, what a good boy you are! But you might have hurt yourself.”

“The chair isn’t high enough to hurt anybody. Come, let’s have a game.”

Afterwards when Sophie passed the parcel that was lying unopen on the table, she would have stopped to feast her eyes on it, but Paul pulled her away.

“Aunt Cecile hates to be teased, and she’ll give us some by and by,” he said.

That afternoon Sophie’s mother did call them.

“Come children, now we will open that famous parcel and taste the candied fruits. Run, Paul, and bring a knife to cut the string.”

Paul was off like an arrow and returned with a knife. The string was cut, and the



Candied Fruits



SOPHIE TOOK A LONG TIME TO CHOOSE

wrapper undone, disclosing a big box of candied fruits and apricot paste.

“We will try them and see if they are as delicious as they look. Take two candies, Sophie. Choose the two you like best. There are pears, plums, cherries, nuts, and angelica.”

Sophie hesitated. Then she looked carefully to see which of them was the largest. Finally she chose a pear and an apricot.

Paul took angelica and a plum.

Sophie's mother closed the box and carried



Happy Surprises

it away. Sophie watched till she saw it placed on the highest shelf of a closet.

“I must go to the village now,” said her mother. “I am sorry to have to leave you and Paul, but you may play in the garden.”

No sooner were they alone, than Sophie exclaimed:

“It’s too bad that I did not chose angelica and a plum. They must have tasted very good, Paul.”

“Yes,” said Paul. “They were delicious. You’ll have them to-morrow. Don’t worry. Come and play.”

Their game was Paul’s invention. It was digging a well. What to do with the well afterwards, they had not decided. But digging was endless joy! Endless, because as fast as they poured water into the hole, it filtered into the ground. If they had been ordered to do this, they would have felt themselves abused, but when work is play that is different.

They were busy and happy. Suddenly Paul’s foot slipped and he fell into the well, emptying the watering-pot over him.



Candied Fruits

“Ugh!” he said. “It’s cold! I must change my shoes and stockings. Wait here for me. I’ll be back in a minute.”

For a time Sophie remained by the well, dipping her little shovel up and down in the water. But she was not thinking of the water or of the shovel, or of Paul.

She was thinking of the candied fruits and angelica and plums. She was saying to herself:

“Tomorrow, Mother will surely give me some. But then I shall not have time to choose. If I examine them beforehand, I can make up my mind what to take. Suppose I do it now. I need only open the box and look.”

She ran into the house and up to her mother’s room. Everything was quiet. Marie was down stairs. Softly Sophie opened the closet door and tried to reach the box, but the shelf was too high. She tried a stick, she tried the poker, she tried the tongs. She was desperate.

“What shall I do? How shall I ever manage it?”

Then her eyes fell on an arm-chair.



Happy Surprises

“How stupid I am! I’ll take that over and climb on it.”

Between pushing and pulling she got the big red arm-chair to the closet, and climbed on its arm. She seized the box from the shelf and slid down into the chair. She opened the box on her lap, and began examining the fruits.

“They all look so delicious! Which one shall I choose? I’ll nibble a little off each and then I’ll know just what ones are best. I’ll take only a tiny bite.”

So Sophie nibbled and nibbled the angelica, then a prune, then an apricot, then a nut, then a pear, then a cherry. Each one seemed better than the last. She commenced again; and she commenced again so many times that before she knew it, there was almost nothing left in the box.

“Oh dear! Oh dear! What have I done? I meant only to taste. Mother will see when she opens the box, and she will guess that it was I—She may think it was mice—I saw one in the cornbin yesterday. No—perhaps she’ll think it was a rat! Rats are bigger



Candied Fruits

than mice, they must eat more—and I have eaten nearly everything!”

She shut the box and put it back again in the closet. Then she scrambled down from the chair and hurried back to the well. She had only time to take up her shovel, when Paul came.

“I’ve been gone a long while, haven’t I? Baptiste had to brush my shoes. What have you been doing?”

Sophie was embarrassed.

“I played with the shovel,” she half-whispered.

“Lend it to me to loosen the ground, while you get some water.”

Sophie was glad to do the errand. When she returned, Paul gave back the shovel, saying:

“It sticks to my fingers. What on earth have you been doing with it?”

“Nothing much,” and Sophie plunged both her hands into the watering-pot, for she felt that they were very sticky.

“Why are you washing your hands in the watering-pot, Sophie?”



Happy Surprises

Sophie, confused, did not know what to say. Paul looked puzzled.

“What’s the matter with you, anyhow?” he asked. “You act as if something was wrong.”

“I don’t see why you say that. You are always saying disagreeable things,” cried Sophie.

Paul was surprised.

“I didn’t mean to say anything disagreeable—”

He stopped because Marie had come to call Sophie.

“Good night, Sophie!”

“Good night, Paul,” was all she said.

That night Sophie dreamed that she was standing before a garden filled with beautiful flowers and delicious fruits. A troop of pretty children held wide the gate and beckoned to her. But just as she was entering, her Good Angel drew her back.

“Do not go there, Sophie,” the Angel said. “Those fruits are deadly. The perfume of those flowers is poison. Those children were once sweet and kind, but they have become wicked and cruel. This is the Garden of Evil.



Candied Fruits

Come with me along yonder path to the Garden of Good."

"No, I don't want to go there," said Sophie. "The road is rough and the sharp stones will hurt my feet. Here the paths are soft and smooth and shine like gold."

Then she drew her hand from the hand of the Good Angel, and ran into the Garden. She could hear the Angel calling:

"Come back, Sophie! Come back! I shall wait for you at the gate, and if you return to me, I shall lead you to the Garden of Good. The road to it will become softer and pleasanter as you travel on."

But Sophie dreamed that she would not listen. The pretty children were smiling and beckoning, and she ran to them. Then they crowded close around her, and mocked and pinched her and held her so fast that she could not escape from them.

When she would have picked a lovely rose, she did not know its stem was covered with thorns till they tore her hands. She tasted some tempting fruit, but it was more bitter than bitter. Nothing was good. Then in spite of the cries and promises of the children,



Happy Surprises

she turned and fled to the Good Angel, who led her gently along the stony path.

It was hard for the first few steps, but it grew always easier. She had already begun to feel the soft breeze and to hear the singing of birds, when she opened her eyes.

That was surely a dream! But to Sophie it seemed very real and strange.

"I must tell Mother about it," she thought.

"It is a lesson for you to learn and to remember," her mother said when she had heard the dream. "If you choose to follow your own naughty way because it seems pleasant, you will have troubles of all kinds. Your Good Angel's name in Conscience. And if you follow where she leads you, you will be happy. All your life you will be loved and loving."

Sophie, sitting on the little stool at her mother's feet, grew restless. She began to move uneasily. She hung her head. She glanced up at her mother. She wished to speak, but she was ashamed. Her mother understood and helped her.

"You have something to tell me, Sophie? You do not dare to, because it is hard to con-



Candied Fruits

fess a fault. This is the rough road! Now spring bravely among the stones where Conscience is leading you.”

Sophie covered her face with her hands, and sobbed. Then she told how she had eaten the candied fruits, when she meant only to look at them.

“And, O Mother!” she added, “I am sorry. I hoped you would think that mice or rats did it.”

“How could I think that? Mice and rats only nibble through boxes. They don’t take off covers. Besides, they wouldn’t have needed the red chair to get to the top of the closet.”

“Mother! How did you find out about the arm-chair?”

“You forgot to put it back. I was coming through the hall when I saw you slip into my room. When I found the box, I knew that it was you who had nearly emptied it. Although you have done right to confess your fault, your punishment must be to eat no more of the candied fruits that are left.”

Silently Sophie kissed her mother and went away. She felt sure she would always prefer the rough road.



Happy Surprises

“What’s the matter with your eyes?” asked Paul. “They are so very red.”

“That’s because I have been crying,” said Sophie, ready to cry again.

“What have you been crying for? Has Aunt Cecile been scolding you?”

“No. But I was ashamed to confess what a wicked thing I did yesterday.”

“A wicked thing! I didn’t see you do anything at all.”

“I did it when you weren’t there. But now I have begun to be different, and I shall not hide things from you any more.”

Then she told him how she had gone into the house and eaten the candied fruits, when she meant only to choose one for the next day.

“And that’s what made the shovel so sticky,” she added.

“How brave you were to tell Aunt Cecile about it,” said Paul admiringly. “How did you have the courage?”

Then Sophie told her dream, and how her mother had explained it. And when Paul had listened attentively, she cried:

“I’ve got a splendid idea! I do believe that



Candied Fruits

if you and I talk about that dream every day, Paul, we shall grow up good—both of us.”

When she was finished reading, Madame de Fleurville closed the portfolio.

“I think Sophie’s dream is meant for each of us,” she said. “If we remember to follow where Conscience leads, we are very sure to be happy.”

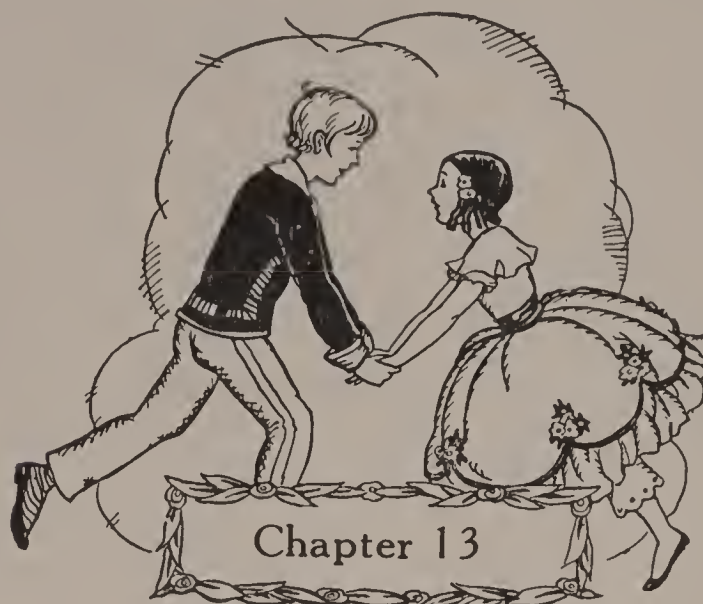
“They are beautiful stories, all of them!” cried Marguerite.

“I just love them,” said Camilla.

And Madeleine threw both arms about Sophie, and exclaimed:

“I wish I had been there with you and Paul all the time, Sophie! Then I could have been in the stories.”





SAVAGES AHOY!

The Biggest and Best Surprise of All!

Several days passed, and Colonel de Traypi had not yet returned from Paris.

One morning Madame de Rosbourg said, "I am not going out, children. But you may run down to the White House if you wish."

They all went. Marguerite sat listening to Leconte tell about her father, the Commander, while Lucie gave the others—Carmilla, Madeleine, and Sophie—a lesson in making bags and baskets out of melon seeds.



Savages Ahoy

First they were to eat the melons, then dry the seeds in the sunshine, and after that string them on bright cords.

Françoise fed the boys great plates full of galettes, round flat cakes covered with honey, and she gave them pocketfuls of cookies.

“When I am a man,” said Jacques in a loud voice, “I mean to stay here all the time with Marguerite.”

After the jolly visit was over, the children were loitering towards the big house at Fleurville, gathering daisies and munching Françoise’s cookies, when Jacques shouted suddenly:

“There’s Father!”

It was true. There was Colonel de Traypi, calling:

“Hurry! Hurry!”

Down the road they rushed, and tumbled up the terrace steps.

“Come quickly,” said Colonel de Traypi, “and see what I have brought in the shape of good news.”

Major de Ruges, Madame de Fleurville and Madame de Rosbourg were there. And be-



Happy Surprises

side them stood a stranger, who was looking earnestly at the little girls.

"Which is my daughter, Marguerite?" he asked.

Marguerite's heart had already told her who this stranger was. She threw herself into her father's open arms. He was clasping her as though he would never let her go, when suddenly he set her on the ground, and exclaimed:

"Sophie de Rean! How under the sun and stars did you ever come here?"

And he caught up Sophie and held her off gazing at her. Then he put her down as he had put down Marguerite, and turning to Madame de Fleurville, asked:

"Wherever did you get her? The last time I saw her, she was in a box on the sea, where the waves tossed higher than a house. My poor child," and his voice was full of pity, "how did you get out of that sailor's chest?"

"I don't know. They said Father saved me," murmured Sophie.

Here Madame de Fleurville glanced meaningfully at Commander de Rosbourg, who understood and asked no more questions.



Savages Ahoy

"I don't know where Paul is either," added Sophie just ready to cry.

"Well! I know!" the Commander's voice was cheery and his smile bright. "He is upstairs this very minute unbuckling our trunk straps."

"He is in the room next to mine," said Madame de Fleurville gently.

If Sophie had been born with wings, she could not have flown faster.

Then the others heard exclamations, shoutings, laughter. And afterwards there was a great scurrying of feet, and Sophie surrounded by the excited band of children, herself the most excited of all, drew Paul onto the terrace. He was a little shy at finding himself among so many strangers but Commander de Rosbourg said:

"Come, my boy! No savages here! All friends and white ones at that. Here's Marguerite, and here is—my faith! I don't know one of them myself—so let every one kiss everybody to make acquaintance, and then find out names. It's the best we can do."

Then there was a general commotion—laughing, kissing and shaking of hands. The



Happy Surprises

kind, handsome face of Commander de Rosbourg won all the children, and Paul was so tall and looked so good and clever that he stole their hearts.

When there was a hush, and the Commander said:

“Ladies and gentlemen, Babel means “confusion of tongues” and we are it! I propose we go in search of peace and quietness.”

They all laughed and went into the house.

“Now, Paul, you must be introduced,” said Sophie. “This is my dear Marguerite. I love her and so will you—And here are Camilla and Madeleine. They are my really truly sisters—This is Jacques de Traypi—he is gold-good—This is Jean de Ruges who is just like you, and this is Leon his brother.”

Then they asked many questions, and Paul was ready to answer them all. He always called the Commander my Father, and spoke of him in such an affectionate way, that Marguerite said:

“You love my Father so much, Mr. Paul, that I love you just for that!”

“If you love me, you will say Paul, without the Mister.”



EVERYBODY WAS HAPPIER THAN EVER BEFORE



Happy Surprises

“Surely I will. I shall be glad to, for I feel as if I had a brother. I’ve always wanted one.”

“That’s good, for I know you as well as though I were your brother. My Father—I mean our Father—has talked of you every day. I am certain I can tell you just what you were like when you were a baby.”

“You’ll tell me some day, won’t you?”

Paul laughed and promised.

After that he and Sophie had a thousand things to say to each other. Before evening Sophie had told him all that had happened since the old days.

“Now explain, Paul, how did you find us here at Fleurville?”

“After my Father and I escaped from the savages, we were rescued by a ship and safely reached France. My Father went directly to the office of the Secretary of the Navy, and chanced to meet Colonel de Traypi there, who was searching for us. We came back with him. But I do not understand how he knew about us.”

“A man we met in the woods, told us about you,” said Sophie, “and we hoped that you



Savages Ahoy

had escaped from the savages as he did. That is why Colonel de Traypi went to Paris.”

“Who was the man?”

“His name is Leconte, but he says the sailors called him, the Norman.”

“The Norman!” exclaimed Paul. “Oh, that is magnificent! We thought the savages had killed him. Where does he live?”

Then Paul would have gone to him without waiting, but Marguerite said:

“It’s so late and so dark. Please let’s all go tomorrow and tell him Father has come. I wonder what he’ll do!”

As she was speaking, Madame de Fleurville came into the room with Commander de Rosbourg. When he heard that the Norman was so near, he, too, would have gone at once to find him.

“There is not another such man in the world!” he said. “But all the same, on second thought, we’ll wait till to-morrow.”

“It is long past the children’s bedtime,” said Madame de Fleurville, “and I am sure Paul is tired.”

“Paul! Tired!” repeated the Commander. “Paul doesn’t know what the word means.



Happy Surprises

He has walked and walked till he is as strong as a young giant. But surely the others need sleep. Come, my Marguerite!"

"Good night, all!"

The next day was an exciting one for the children. Paul was shown everything, the big house, the park, the gardens, the summer-houses, and the farm. Last and best of all they went together to the White House.

When the Norman saw his Commander walk in, he staggered and would have fallen. For the first time in his life, he could not speak.

Then when Commander de Rosbourg met him like a long lost friend, and promised that they should never separate again, there was nothing left in life for Leconte to desire.

"Now," said Commander de Rosbourg to the children after they had reached Fleurville, "I have a last Surprise for you!"

"I am not going to sea again, but shall always stay with those I love. They are too precious to leave.

"This is the Surprise—I have bought land next to Madame de Fleurville's, and there I shall build my home—and—and—"



Savages Ahoy

Here he stopped and looked at the children, who were listening eagerly.

“And—and—you three boys will spend your vacations with us—Paul and Marguerite need never be separated—and our nearest neighbors will be these three young ladies of Fleurville, Camilla, Madeleine, and Sophie. All who like this, clap their hands!”

Never before or after was there such a celebration in Fleurville.

When order was restored, Camilla said:

“Ever since the day Marguerite came, we have had Surprise after Surprise. Such happy ones! But this is truly the happiest of all!”









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